

## Still Buffering 308: "Into the Woods"

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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, Raleigh, will this— no, this is our next-to-last show... no?

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Ever? What?

**Sydnee:** Before— no. [laughs] Before you—

**Raleigh:** *Ever.*

**Sydnee:** No, before you—[laughs]

**Raleigh:** Surprise!

**Taylor:** You all need to tell me these things!

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** I realize I shouldn't have trailed off at that point in the sentence. Before you finish college is what I was gonna say.

**Raleigh:** Yes, yeah.

**Taylor:** Oh, okay. [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** Not our last show.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Next-to-last.

**Raleigh:** One more after this one, I'll finish college.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. But when it comes out, you'll have finished college, I think.

**Raleigh:** Um...

**Sydnee:** Like, the next one.

**Raleigh:** That's possible. It just depends. We gotta see.

**Sydnee:** If you pass? [laughs]

**Raleigh:** If I— well, no!

**Sydnee:** Is that up in the air? [laughs]

**Raleigh:** When the e— when the episode goes up! [laughs]

**Taylor:** Down to the wire.

**Sydnee:** She's— it's like— there's gonna be, like, a montage of Raleigh studying for the next week to try to pass that big final exam, so that teach'll let her graduate. [laughs]

**Raleigh:** Listen. It is, actually. All of my— I don't know why professors do this. It's called "Dead Week," which is supposed to mean you don't do anything, you don't go to class, nothing is due, you just study all week, because it's the week before finals week. All of my stuff is due by the end of this week, so all I've been doing is working nonstop, all night, every night, for this entire week.

But then I'm done by Sunday with every class except for one, which the final is not until Friday, the very last final time available. And it is just my Spanish final, um, and it is an online Spanish class so it has been very difficult to learn Spanish online this semester, especially 'cause I didn't take the last one— or I did take the last one two and a half years ago. So...

**Sydnee:** Yeah. It's much easier when you get to speak a language with people.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Rileigh:** Yeah. And I went the entire pandemic without taking, you know, a foreign language class. So then it was like, "Hey, welcome back. It's your last semester of college. Remember that bit of Spanish you learned before the pandemic happened? Time to use that." My brain doesn't have that anymore.

**Sydnee:** I went to a, um, ceremony yesterday, to thank healthcare workers. Well, not just healthcare workers. Anybody who worked with the health department to fight COVID in our community.

**Rileigh:** Mm-hmm. At my school.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Rileigh:** The ceremony was at my school, yes.

**Sydnee:** Yes, yes. In the Don Morris room. [laughs] There were— there was—

**Rileigh:** That's where everything is.

**Sydnee:** There were snacks from Sodexo.

**Rileigh:** [through laughter] From Sodexo.

**Sydnee:** Sodexo snacks. Cookies. The cookies and brownies.

**Rileigh:** Brownies.

**Sydnee:** Sodexo brownies that you love.

**Rileigh:** I love those brownies.

**Sydnee:** I should've stolen you some. Um, but they gave us a coin, a commemorative coin. [laughs quietly] For, like, COVID.

**Rileigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** Well, for helping. Like—

**Raleigh:** [holding back laughter] For COVID!

**Sydnee:** It's a lovely—

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** I was gonna say—

**Sydnee:** It—

**Taylor:** You—

**Sydnee:** It is a lovely coin to thank us for all the hard work we did fighting COVID. But, um, it had, like, the years on it. Like, the coin actually says 2020 to 2021, which was really surreal 'cause I was looking at it and thinking, "Did it end?" [laughs]

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** I like the idea that—

**Raleigh:** Last year?

**Taylor:** —you're gonna need something to remember COVID by.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Raleigh:** You need a little coin. So in ten years you can be like, "Oh... I had completely forgotten about that.

**Taylor:** Remember— remember that wacky time period of— it's still going on— that we had a deadly virus plague the planet? [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** It was— it was so weird. And then, like, the PowerPoint they were showing of, like, scenes of people giving vaccines and doing testing and all the great stuff— I mean, 'cause, like, I'm joking around about the coin. Truly, our health department did an incredible job, especially in this community. Our health department is really stellar, and they did an amazing job.

So, like, the people in this room are heroes. They really are. And I don't include myself. I just did my job. But, like, they're amazing people. But, um... they showed on the PowerPoint, like, COVID: 2020 to 2022. [laughs quietly] So they did admit in the PowerPoint that, like, it did— it did sort of spill over into this year. [laughs quietly] But—

**Taylor:** COVID: in memoriam.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] It does! It felt like an in memoriam.

**Raleigh:** [simultaneously] That's what I was gonna say! It seemed like an in memoriam.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] And it was very weird, 'cause I was thinking, like— like, I was looking at other people in the room going like, "It's not over, right?"

And they— they were going like, "I didn't think so." [laughs]

**Taylor:** [laughs] Was it just like— was there music in the background? Was, it like, Green Day's "Time Of Your Life"?

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** [laughs] It was— it was—

**Raleigh:** Vitamin C.

**Sydnee:** It was a surreal experience. It was, like— it was weird, because not everybody had masks on. But at the same time, the Don Morris room is huge, and there were only ever, like, 20 people. 'Cause it was, like, a come and go thing. And so, like, all spread— like, social distanced around the room. [laughs]

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** So it felt... I don't know. It was lovely. The coin was lovely. The girls were very impressed with the coin.

**Raleigh:** Oh, I'm sure.

**Sydnee:** And they did— they put the coin— they said "Now, we're putting one of these coins in a— in the time capsule that we buried recently." You know, we just—

**Raleigh:** I saw that.

**Sydnee:** —buried a time capsule recently? Well, one of these COVID coins is in it. And they were like, "So it'll still be there when we open it in 100 years." And the presenter said, "Of course, none of you will be alive."

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** Burn. [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** [through laughter] Which is a fun energy!

**Raleigh:** That's a fun energy.

**Taylor:** [sighs]

**Raleigh:** Especially when it's something like a time capsule where it's like, we understand the premise. You don't need to explicitly explain that none of us—

**Sydnee:** [wheezes]

**Raleigh:** —are going to be here. That's kind of the point. Like, we get it.

**Sydnee:** Oh, you never know. I'm holding out hope.

[all laugh]

**Sydnee:** Don't count—

**Raleigh:** Also, as if—

**Sydnee:** Don't count me out so fast!

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** As if in 100 years this time capsule and this coin is going to teach people of the future about the COVID pandemic. [laughs] "Wow, had you ever heard of this?"

**Taylor:** I googled the word on this coin, and there's a wild story here!

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Yeah?

**Taylor:** Some future medical history podcast will be able to tell the story of COVID because of that coin in the time capsule.

**Sydnee:** They will. They'll be like, "What is this that happened in 2020 to 2021 that ended definitely that year?"

**Rileigh:** In 2021, mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** That ended in 2021. It was— again, I don't want to seem ungrateful. It was very nice. And it was also— it was very cathartic, I think, for the— the room of people were all feeling the same things and making the same jokes and sort of, like, I mean... 'cause no one feels that it's over. But it was nice to be recognized for how hard it's been.

**Rileigh:** Right.

**Sydnee:** So... anyway.

**Rileigh:** How nice.

**Sydnee:** I'll show you my coin if you wanna see it.

**Rileigh:** Oh, thanks.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** I'm sure that after the past couple years everybody that works in healthcare has every right to a somewhat dark sense of humor. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** [laughs] I think that's true. That already sort of exists in the medical world, and this definitely... deepened it.

**Rleigh:** I got a coin on a necklace. Like, a— it's a medallion, but it's basically just a big coin on a necklace.

**Sydnee:** Hmm.

**Rleigh:** For graduating from the honors college. And then I get another one next week for my scholarship. So instead of having a lot of cords at this graduation, I just have two medals clanking against each other [through laughter] as I'm walking across the stage!

**Sydnee:** Two medals. Do you— now, is the medal— is the Yeager medallion still made of the same material?

**Rleigh:** They don't say that anymore.

**Sydnee:** 'Cause they used to say that it was— not made of the plane that broke the sound barrier.

**Rleigh:** They pretty much insinuated it's made of the plane.

**Sydnee:** Well, but it's— I don't— I mean, my understanding is it's not made of *the* plane. Like, they didn't tear the plane apart to make medallions. [wheezy laughter] But they made it out of the same material that the plane was made of.

**Rleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Well, if that's it, like, what— like, just, like, "Oh, it's made of metal. Planes are too!"

**Rleigh:** Plane metal. Yeager metal!

**Sydnee:** Well, I guess it was special met—[laughs]

**Rleigh:** Special metal?!

**Sydnee:** It was— right? Wasn't it special metal that the— we should know this. We're Yeager scholars.



**Rileigh:** I don't know.

**Sydnee:** Named for Chuck Yeager, breaker of the sound barrier.

**Rileigh:** Two years of college in a pandemic for me. I don't think it counts. Um...

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

**Rileigh:** Yeah, I don't know.

**Sydnee:** I thought the plane was made of special material.

**Rileigh:** Did it require special metal to break the sound barrier? Is that, like, a key?

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** Like, "A ha!"

**Taylor:** How do you both not know this? Don't you have to, like, take a class on—[laughs]

**Rileigh:** Well, they did give us his biography as soon as we were accepted into the program, and told us to read it 'cause we'd need it for the rest of college. [laughs] But I— I've never read it. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Back when I was a scholar the general was still with us, and he would come to symposium and show that movie about him, and it may have been mentioned in the movie about him. I don't remember.

**Rileigh:** We did—

**Sydnee:** But I did see it four separate years, so you would think I would remember.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** It's a lovely medallion.

**Rileigh:** Mm, mm-hmm. Has my name on it.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Rileigh:** There— I was very tempted to use— er, our coordinator asked us what names we wanted on them. I was like, "I understand why you're asking, 'cause some people go by different names maybe than what's, like, in the system. But does that mean I can just tell you want... whatever? Like, whatever name I want on here?"

**Taylor:** Like a nickname?

**Rileigh:** And she— yeah! And she was like, "I mean... I guess?"

**Sydnee:** Like, do you just want it to say Taylor Swift?

**Rileigh:** I— yeah, like—

**Sydnee:** And then everybody would be like—

**Rileigh:** I— something cool or memorable.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** Not just, like, the full name.

**Taylor:** Get one of your guinea pigs' names on it.

**Rileigh:** Yeah!

**Taylor:** And then you can just tell people that your guinea pig won a major award.

**Rileigh:** [excited] Oh my gosh! I want it to say Ruth Bader Guineasberg!

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** Like, "No, no. I don't have a medal that belongs to Ruth Bader Ginsberg. That would be amazing. This one belongs to my guinea pig, who completed college on an advanced scholarship program."

**Taylor:** Yeah, that'd be a good move.

**Sydnee:** It's a great guinea pig.

**Rileigh:** [sighs] Yeah, it's a great guinea pig. Um, no, but it does just say Rileigh Booth Smirl, so... I got nervous. Didn't go with the goof.

**Sydnee:** You'll be glad it has your name on it someday.

**Rileigh:** [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** [laughs] I— I'm sure if I could find mine... no. I know—[laughs]

**Rileigh:** If you could find it?!

**Sydnee:** No, I know where mine is. Although mine... mine has—

**Rileigh:** It's like the COVID coin. You find it and you're like "Ah, right. I forgot I did that."

**Sydnee:** "I forgot I was a Yeager scholar." No. I know where mine is.

**Rileigh:** Um... I also... in addition to completing college...

**Sydnee:** You're very busy with another project.

**Rileigh:** Yes. It's a musical! It's a musical. It's *Into the Woods*.

**Sydnee:** Uh, can I tell you, last night, um...

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** So, Justin's out of town on tour, and mom came over last night to, uh... we were out of bubble solution for the bubble guns that she had gotten the girls. And— so she was bringing the extra bubble solution, and just seeing if there was anything she could do to help me out. And I was like, "No, I'm gonna get 'em

down, and then I've gotta watch *Into the Woods* again because we're talking about it tomorrow."

And then I went, "I don't know if I need to watch it again." I've seen it fairly recently. I think we showed it to the girls, but I've watched it fairly recently, and I was like, "I don't know if I need to watch it again. I've seen it so recently. I feel like I remember it all. I don't know."

And mom was like, "Oh. Well, let me tell you about it."

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Mom—I love you, mom. I know you're listening. Mom stood on my front porch and recounted the entire plot of [wheezes] *Into the Woods* to me last night! [laughs]

**Rileigh:** Yeah, she did!

**Sydnee:** It was so cute! [laughs] It was adorable! And she just— I mean, she did! She told me the entire plot of *Into the Woods*. So, just in case I didn't have time to watch it last night... mom walked me through the whole thing. It was a very dad thing to do, to be fair.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Rileigh:** That is a very dad thing to do. I'm surprised mom was the one to do that.

**Sydnee:** Mom walked me through the entire plot of *Into the Woods* last night.

**Taylor:** I don't know. I feel like they're sort of merging in certain ways. 'Cause now mom will tell you about somebody that you don't know that died.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** This is true.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** I think that happens. I made a joke yesterday at that event, and I told Justin later, like— I realized as I was saying it, like, this is such a Justin joke. I don't even know why I'm making this joke. This doesn't sound like me at all, but this is something Justin would say, and it popped into my head, and I said it.

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** [laughs] I don't—

**Raleigh:** Uh-huh?

**Sydnee:** I just think that happens. You spend enough time with another person, and you just... you fuse.

**Raleigh:** You become one, yeah.

**Sydnee:** It's fusion is what it is, yeah.

**Taylor:** [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** That's what happens.

**Raleigh:** Um, no. Now it's time for me to recount the entire plot of *Into the Woods*—

**Sydnee:** [laughs loudly]

**Raleigh:** —for the next 35 minutes. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** It's long.

**Raleigh:** It's long! Um...

**Sydnee:** Well, it's plot-heavy. I shouldn't say— I mean, it is long, but it's also just like a lot happens.

**Raleigh:** Yes. There are many characters, many story lines. Um, if you're unfamiliar, it's a musical that first came out in 1986, um, and then became very, very popular on Broadway, and all of that, and then, um, was turned into— well,

they filmed a stage production of it with the original, you know, Broadway cast. That was released. But then it became a major— a major motion picture in 2014.

**Sydnee:** This musical is the same age as you, Tey.

**Taylor:** I was thinking about that.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Raleigh:** Oh! I didn't even think about that.

**Sydnee:** It occurred to me.

**Raleigh:** Wow.

**Taylor:** I am *Into the Woods* years old.

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Raleigh:** Um, but it is essentially a bunch of Grimm Fairy Tale— like, Grimm's Fairy Tale stories. Not grim. I mean...

**Sydnee:** Some of them are grim.

**Raleigh:** They are grim. Um, those original fairy tale stories kind of melded into one... big— it was like the original crossover. You know?

**Sydnee:** Yeah. It's like that— what's that TV show where they have all the storybook characters?

**Taylor:** Oh yeah.

**Sydnee:** But it's like a drama?

**Raleigh:** Oh, *Once Upon a Time*?

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Rileigh:** Yeah, it's like *Once Upon a Time*. Um, but musical? I don't think they sing in that. I've never seen it, to be fair.

**Sydnee:** I don't know. I have seen so many commercials and, like, pictures and things on Facebook from that show, and I think— I don't even know if it's still on. But it feels like the kind of thing where, like, I see it and I'm like, "Oh, gosh." And roll my eyes.

But if I watched one episode, I would probably be in for the whole thing! Like, I wouldn't be able to stop. I'd be like, "Well, now I gotta keep watching." [laughs quietly]

**Rileigh:** Gotta get into that. Um... but yeah, it's Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Jack and the Beanstalk. The Baker and the Baker's Wife are just as essential to the story. Are they from anything, or are they just a baker and a baker's wife? Was there a fairy tale that was just about a baker?

**Sydnee:** That is a fairy tale.

**Rileigh:** Is it? Okay. Well, I don't know that one.

**Sydnee:** I believe— I believe *The Baker's Wife* is what it's...

**Rileigh:** Really?

**Sydnee:** I think.

**Rileigh:** Well, I just know them from *Into the Woods* the musical. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** You keep talking. I'm gonna double check myself right there. Did I make that— I thought it was an— I thought that was an independent story.

**Rileigh:** I mean, that would make sense, because they all are. I guess in my head I just thought it was, like, a character they created as a plot device to kind of tie everything together. Um, Rapunzel is also up in there. The first act is all happy. They all have these wishes, these things they want. They sing about them.

By the end of Act 1, they all get what they wished for, that they went into the woods to get. But then Act 2 happens. Everything falls apart.

A lot of people die in this musical, I'll say that up front. Um, I think more than half of the people in the show do die by the end of the musical. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Yeah, that was part of mom recounting it was like, "Here are the only people left alive at the end." And then she was telling me—[laughs]

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** I— I want a— I want a definitive list of, like, the highest body count in a musical. 'Cause I know this is up there. There are definitely higher ones, uh, but...

**Raleigh:** Uh... *Les Mis* has gotta be up there with it too, right?

**Taylor:** Yeah. And, like, *Sweeney Todd*.

**Raleigh:** A lot of people die in *Les Mis*. *Sweeney Todd*.

**Sydnee:** Okay, no, I made this up. The baker and the baker's wife were invented.

**Raleigh:** Okay. See, that's what I thought is they were just, like, characters that were created to bring them all together. Because they are the characters that through all of Act 1 are trying to find all of these other fairy tale characters to complete this potion so that they can have a baby.

**Sydnee:** But they don't, like— they are living within the world. They don't— it's not like, "We're in search of fairy tale characters."

**Raleigh:** No. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. They coexist with the fairy tales. Um, but, like, they're looking for a cape that's red, so they're looking for Little Red Riding Hood. They're looking for a cow that Jack and the Beanstalk, Jack has this cow. A gold slipper comes from Cinderella. So they're the ones that are, like, finding everyone and kind of bringing it all together.

**Sydnee:** And Rapunzel's hair?

**Raleigh:** And Rapunzel's hair. Yes, that's right.

**Sydnee:** That's a weird one.



**Rileigh:** [holding back laughter] The cow as white as milk, the cape as red as blood, the hair as yellow as corn, the slipper as pure as gold. There you go.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Rileigh:** Um, everything in this musical is sung, by the way. A lot of singing.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm, and a hard one.

**Rileigh:** And a hard one. Sondheim really... rest in peace, he made a hard musical.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Rileigh:** [muffled laughter]

**Sydnee:** Well, I'm gonna go out on a limb here and say he was very talented.

**Rileigh:** He was very talented. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** That was kind of his thing though, right? Like, all his musicals are all very complex, musically.

**Rileigh:** Yeah. Um, but it's really cool, because— I should note, we are current—the reason mom was able to stand there and recount the entire plot of *Into the Woods* is because we are currently doing a production of *Into the Woods*.

**Sydnee:** [laughs quietly]

**Rileigh:** I wanted to make that very clear. We're not just a family that's very into *Into the Woods*.

**Sydnee:** Uhh... well...

**Rileigh:** I mean, we are. We— we are, but—

**Sydnee:** How many times have mom and dad been involved in productions of *Into the Woods*?

**Rileigh:** This is now their third.

**Sydnee:** So... [laughs]

**Rileigh:** Um, yes. This is now my second. Um... but we are currently doing a production of *Into the Woods*. I am playing Cinderella. Mom and dad are directing this production. Um, it is very cool once you're actually, like, learning the music to see all of the recurring, like, musical themes that are in almost every song, and all of the lines he's written to, like, call back to other moments in the show that belong to other characters and, like, all this kind of stuff.

Um, it is a very complex musical. But when you actually get to, like, get into it, it's even more complex than it already sounds. It's very cool. It's also got a really fast song in it that was one of the fastest before *Hamilton* happened. Um, they're all trying to blame each other. It's called "Your Fault." Very fast, very hard.

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

**Rileigh:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** We, um— we wanted to do a version— this is a story about *Into the Woods*. We wanted to do...

**Taylor:** [laughs quietly]

**Rileigh:** Good, I'm glad you clarified.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** It'd be weird if it wasn't.

[all laugh]

**Sydnee:** We— when, uh, we were young, when Justin and I were young— Taylor, you were young too. Rileigh, you did not exist yet.

**Rileigh:** I didn't exist.

**Taylor:** Chronologically, yes. But where are you getting with this?

**Rileigh:** [laughs] That's a weird story!

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** We were part of a children's theater group, and the children's theater group had a youth advisory council.

**Rileigh:** YAC.

**Sydnee:** The YAC, as we called it. And Justin and I were both on the YAC. Taylor, were you ever on the YAC?

**Taylor:** Absolutely not.

**Sydnee and Rileigh:** [laugh loudly]

**Sydnee:** I don't like the derision with which you said this.

**Rileigh:** That very much at the tone of, "Nerds."

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** "Friggin' nerds."

**Sydnee:** We were.

**Taylor:** No further comment. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** I think Justin was president of the YAC, and he would, like, preside over the meetings with a turkey baster that he would, like, pound on the table.

**Rileigh:** Real— did he— are you making that up, or is that real?

**Sydnee:** No, that's real.

**Taylor:** That sounds accurate. That sounds believable.

**Sydnee:** It's Justin.

**Rileigh:** I... that's fair.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. Um, we had a lot of fun. The YAC was a lot of fun.

**Rileigh:** [laughs] We had a lot of fun together.

**Sydnee:** We were trying to push to do a kids show. Which— like a junior show.

**Rileigh:** Uh-huh.

**Sydnee:** So, like, I mean, it was a children's theater. Obviously we did shows with kids in them. But we wanted to do, like, specifically a junior show, which is like a shorter, cut-down version of a regular show.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** And we decided we would do *Into the Woods* junior, which is essentially just the first act of *Into the Woods*.

**Rileigh:** It's just Act 1, yeah.

**Sydnee:** [laughs quietly] But we watched *Into the Woods* as a reference for this. So we all are sitting in— this was our basement back on Belmont.

**Rileigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** Watching *Into the Woods* all together, um, singing along with it—

**Rileigh:** Of course.

**Sydnee:** —those of us who knew songs. Um, and it's very long. And that was the main thing we were all sort of— like, "Gosh, this is too long. It's so long." And so the song that the pri— the song the princes sing about agony, we created our parody of how the show is agony, [through laughter] because the show is so long!

**Rileigh:** [simultaneously] Because the show is so long.

**Sydnee:** And this is agony. And we sang that for years! Like, Justin and I in our marriage reference [laughs] singing about—[laughs]

**Raleigh:** I feel like I've heard that before.

**Sydnee:** —the agony of *Into the Woods* because it was so long. I don't feel that way now as an adult, but as a teenager with a limited attention span who also was in a, like— a room full of fellow theater people of various, like, um... I don't know. Uh... you know? Like, [sighs] theater's a place for... I don't know how to say this in a way that's appropriate.

**Taylor:** Where you are getting with this?

**Sydnee:** Everybody wants to make out with each other.

**Taylor:** Oh, okay.

**Raleigh:** Oh, like the band kids.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. And so, like, in a room of, like, teenagers, and we're all there together and, like, we're supposed to be watching a movie. Like, nobody wants to watch a movie. We all want to make out with each other.

**Raleigh:** [quietly] Oh my gosh, Sydnee...

**Sydnee:** So, like, that was the energy under which we... you know.

**Raleigh:** This was not my theater kid experience, I would like to note. In the same town, with the same children's theater organization, I did not have this experience.

**Sydnee:** Really?

**Raleigh:** We were friends. We all hung out. There was maybe, like, usually a couple that was dating that also was like— that would do shows, and they would come hang out. But there was not an energy where we all wanted to make out with each other.

**Taylor:** I... I cannot relate to any of this. I— I did backstage work.

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** I hid in the shadows. I kept to myself. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** That was always the— I mean, everybody was always talking about— like, we were all, like, open and cool and... you know, left-leaning people.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** So, like, we'd talk about sex. We'd talk about... our bodies.

**Taylor:** Oh.

**Sydnee:** Like, we're all open about this stuff.

**Raleigh:** We talk about *RENT*.

**Sydnee:** Yes. I mean, that—

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** —that, like... like, it was— we were liberated!

**Raleigh:** [simultaneously] You'd talk about *dark* musicals.

**Sydnee:** We felt liberated. And, like, I mean, this was the same energy in show choir. [wheezes] So...

**Raleigh:** Oh my gosh.

**Sydnee:** But yeah. But anyway, we watched *Into the Woods*, and we thought it was agony, 'cause we wanted to make out instead of watching *Into the Woods*.

**Raleigh:** Yeah, no, it's pretty long. Especially, like— usually in a show... in my experience, the second act is already shorter. But not by a ton. It's just like, you get through the first act, it's like, "Wow, that was good." And the second act we're, like, getting to major plot points, wrapping things up. *Into the Woods* is, like, an entire show in the first act, pretty much.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Raleigh:** And then it's just like, "Here's 45 minutes of destroying everything that just happened [laughs] in the first act, as Act 2. You're welcome."

**Sydnee:** It really does.

**Raleigh:** Um, but we will get more into that...

**Sydnee:** Oh! Oh, you're— you— you're gonna do it, huh?

**Raleigh:** What— you—

**Sydnee:** Oh, but I have to say the other part?

**Raleigh:** Uh-huh.

**Sydnee:** Okay. But first, let's check the group message.

**Raleigh:** I thought you were just gonna say "But first... " and I was gonna say "Let's check [trailing off] the group... "

**Sydnee:** Oh. Well, you— I don't know! You— oh...

**Raleigh:** I can't believe we've messed up so badly. Um...

**Taylor:** Yeah, theater kids. What's—[laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** [sighs heavily]

**Sydnee:** We missed our cues, we got our lines wrong.

**Raleigh:** We missed our cues, we messed up our lines. I'm really disappoi— of all the episodes to do this. I'm so sorry to everyone listening. Um... but you know what I didn't goof up? That's, um, a Mother's Day present for our mom. Mom, this is where you stop listening, 'cause we're gonna talk about Mother's Day presents, and I don't want to spoil it.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Raleigh:** Um, and I was trying to think of something good to get our mom, something that would, uh, you know, make her happy. She likes sentimental gifts. She likes, you know, something very emotional. The cry gift, if you will. Um, and

that is why I went to Storyworth. Because mom has lots of stories. Mom has lots of things to tell, including the entire plot of *Into the Woods*.

And Storyworth gives her the opportunity to share all those stories, and all those things about her life that we may not otherwise ask. Because every week, Storyworth emails your mom, or other relative or friend, a thought-provoking question of your choice from a vast pool of possible options.

Each unique prompt asks questions you've never thought of, like "What's some of the best advice your mom gave you?" Or, "If you were to do it all over, what would you do differently?" So, Storyworth sends these questions to your loved one. Uh, they compile all those questions and stories, including photos that your loved one can choose to include, into a beautiful keepsake book the whole family can share for generations.

So, if you're looking for a meaningful gift, even not for Mother's Day, maybe for a birthday or some other holiday coming up, really any time of year where you're looking for something meaningful to give to someone that you just want to know more about, that you know would enjoy sharing about their life with you, Storyworth is a great option.

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

**Taylor:** Well, give all the moms in your life a meaningful gift you'll both cherish for years: Storyworth. Right now, for a limited time, you'll save \$10 on your first purchase when you go to [storyworth.com/stillbuffering](https://storyworth.com/stillbuffering). That's S-T-O-R-Y-W-O-R-T-H.com/stillbuffering to save \$10 on your first purchase. Once again: [storyworth.com/stillbuffering](https://storyworth.com/stillbuffering).

**Sydnee:** So, uh, I'm feeling a little tired. I'm dragging a little bit.

**Raleigh:** Me too.

**Sydnee:** And I know why it is. I know why. Because even though I'm having my coffee, coffee is not enough to get you through the morning. You need breakfast. A good, filling breakfast is a great way to start your day, to have energy to, you know, make it to lunch... when you can have your next meal.

**Raleigh:** The next meal.



**Sydnee:** Uh, and you want a breakfast that's gonna give you a little bit of protein, 'cause getting some protein in the morning is also a great way to feel good throughout the day, and Magic Spoon provides you with cereal that also has protein. What a wonderful way to get your protein in in the morning, with a yummy bowl of cereal.

Um, it has zero grams of sugar, and like I said, 13 to 14 grams of protein in each serving. So that's a— that's a great start for your morning, and it— it's yummy. Um, like cereal often is. It's gluten free, it's grain free, it's soy free. So if you have certain things you've got to avoid in your diet, it'll probably tick those boxes. Um, you can build your own box. It's available in flavors that— you can build your own custom bundle.

So, they've got cocoa, fruity, frosted, peanut butter, cookies and cream, maple waffle, blueberry, and cinnamon, and the newly reformulated honey nut flavor. And then you can mix and match if you want to, if you want to formulate your own box of cereal, like mix some cocoa and some peanut butter together. That's a classic yummy combination.

Um, we love Magic Spoon in this house, because as you may know, my husband is a cereal aficionado. And, uh, Magic Spoon is a yummy cereal that also gets some protein in there too. So, um— so it's a whole, filling, yummy breakfast. Uh, that you can treat yourself to.

Uh, Teylor, if our listeners want to check out Magic Spoon, what should they do?

**Teylor:** Well, they should go to [magicspoon.com/buffering](https://magicspoon.com/buffering) to grab a custom bundle of cereal. And be sure to use our promo code "buffering" at checkout to save \$5 off your order. And Magic Spoon is so confident in their product, it's backed with a 100% happiness guarantee. Again, that's [magicspoon.com/buffering](https://magicspoon.com/buffering), and use the code "buffering".

**Raleigh:** So... Act 2 of *Into the Woods*. [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** [laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** Uh, basically we end Act 1, big song, "Ever After".

**Sydnee:** And, like—

**Rileigh:** Everyone's happy ever after.

**Sydnee:** In all the classic fairy— like, Cinderella's with her prince. Rapunzel's with... her prince?

**Rileigh:** Her prince.

**Sydnee:** The baker— the baker and his wife, their whole story is that they wanna have a baby.

**Rileigh:** They wanna have a baby.

**Sydnee:** And they're pregnant.

**Rileigh:** And a witch has put a spell on them to make it so they can't have a baby, because of something the baker's dad did. Stole— stole her magic beans.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Rileigh:** So, cursed their family. And now they have made this potion where they can have a baby. So they're pregnant.

**Sydnee:** So that's good. Uh, it— does the giant— did Jack kill the giant at the end of Act 1?

**Rileigh:** Giant's gone.

**Sydnee:** The giant's gone.

**Rileigh:** Jack got a gold egg, and a harp. And now they're rich, 'cause they stole from the giant.

**Sydnee:** And Little Red Riding Hood has been liberated from the wolf.

**Rileigh:** Freed from that wolf belly.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Rileigh:** Now has a wolf cape instead of a red cape.

**Sydnee:** I think that's everyone.

**Raleigh:** The stepsisters got their eyes pecked out.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Eesh! Yikes!

**Raleigh:** That's that in the original Cinderella fairy tale, apparently.

**Sydnee:** Oh, and the— the, um, witch became young and beautiful.

**Raleigh:** But lost her powers.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Raleigh:** That happens in these stories.

**Sydnee:** Yes. The witch, originally played by Bernadette Peters.

**Raleigh:** Yes. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** [laughs] There's a lot of love for Bernadette Peters in this house.

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** That's all I'm gonna say.

**Raleigh:** Uh... she did an amazing job. Um, I can understand all the love for Bernadette Peters. But yeah, they're all happy, and Act 2 starts. And, I mean, pretty much the whole— it's a show full of moral lessons. I mean, every once in a while the characters just kind of walk across the stage and share, like, an adage to the tune of music.

Um... so basically all of Act 2 is like, "Hey, be careful what you wished for in Act 1! Here's what happens when it comes true in Act 2. Buckle up."

The giant's wife comes back. Said, "You killed my husband. What's up with that? Give me the boy that did it." That's Jack. Jack's on the run from the giant.

**Sydnee:** So they give... Jack to the giant—

**Rleigh:** No! [laughs] They—[laughs] and that's the show.

**Sydnee:** And the giant kills—

**Rleigh:** It's a five-minute Act 2.

**Sydnee:** —a little boy. [laughs]

**Rleigh:** Where they hand over Jack to the giant. He's gone. Happy ever after.

**Sydnee:** [through laughter] And everyone lives happily ever after.

**Rleigh:** No. [laughs] Um...

**Taylor:** And they all sing a song.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Rleigh:** They all sing a song. "We're happy Jack's gone."

[all laugh]

**Sydnee:** "Give me the boy!"

"Okay."

**Rleigh:** "Okay!" [laughs]

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** "That's fair."

**Sydnee:** "Is that— that's all you wanted? Okay."

**Rleigh:** "We don't know this boy. Um, none of us really know him. He's been in the same scenes as us, but we don't acknowledge each other, so... okay, that's fine."

Um, no. The giant destroys everything, 'cause giant's big. So giant steps on the entire town. Castle's destroyed. Baker's wife, baker, house destroyed. Little Red's house is destroyed. Everything smooshed.

**Sydnee:** The baker's wife hooks up with a prince.

**Rileigh:** The baker's wife hooks up with Cinderella's prince. And then in like all the classic horror movies, because they were naughty, she dies. [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** Hmm. Yeah.

**Taylor:** That's pretty brutal.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** It is brutal.

**Rileigh:** Yeah. He doesn't, which I've never really liked. Um, he just kind of disappears, and then ends up hooking up with, uh, Rapunzel. No, Sleeping Beauty.

**Sydnee:** Cinderella. Oh.

**Rileigh:** Sleeping Beauty. At the end of the musical, Rapunzel's prince has left Rapunzel. Well, Rapunzel dies. Uh, [laughs quietly] Rapunzel's prince has now chosen Snow White, and Cinderella's prince has now chosen Sleeping Beauty.

**Taylor:** Oh?

**Sydnee:** No, the baker hooks up with Cinderella.

**Rileigh:** No.

**Taylor:** We'll, you're—

**Rileigh:** No.

**Taylor:** —I think the play is different than the movie, is what I'm guessing. Because in the movie, the last thing you see from Rapunzel is she rides off on the horse with the prince.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** And then the— and then the last thing you see from the prince is that sort of forgiveness scene between him and Cinderella that... they'll always love each other, but from the distance.

**Rileigh:** Mm-hmm. Exactly.

**Taylor:** So the play is different, yeah.

**Rileigh:** In the musical, Rapunzel is running from the witch. 'Cause, I mean, it's like in the Rapunzel story. The witch has, you know, kept Rapunzel up in a tower. Rapunzel's running from the witch now that, you know, she's free, and looking for her prince. And while running away from her, the giant thinks that this is the boy running towards her that she's looking for. Cinder— er, Rapunzel gets smooched.

**Sydnee:** Okay.

**Rileigh:** S—s—sad.

**Sydnee:** I'm ge— I'm getting all the stories confused.

**Rileigh:** Rapunzel's dead.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Rileigh:** Um... so yeah, they both end up with different princesses. I— okay. I— I see what you mean, because by the end of it, the baker's wife is dead, the baker's alone with his baby, Rapunzel— er, not Rapunzel. [sighs] Too many people Little Red and Jack are both without parents now.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Rileigh:** And they are with the baker. Um, Cinderella's prince is gone. He's not dead, he's just gone. And Cinderella's alone. So it's the four of them, alone with these children that they're caring for. So in a way, the baker and Cinderella are, like... [laughs] co-parenting... these— these orphan children. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** That was the implication, like, that I felt. Like, was they're sort of— maybe not romantic, but they're kind of, like, in it together now.

**Rileigh:** Yeah. Those are the only four left by the end, though. So... and the baby. Five.

**Sydnee:** And the baby. That's a rough... show.

**Rileigh:** That's rough.

**Sydnee:** That kills that many people.

**Rileigh:** Yeah. A few people just kind of disappear. Um, like witch kind of, you know... yells at all of 'em for being selfish, and tells them this is basically— you know, "You all did this to yourselves," and just kind of, poof, she's gone.

**Sydnee:** She— yeah, she just poofs away.

**Rileigh:** Um... yeah. Jack's mom, dead. Very sad.

**Sydnee:** It really is. That was always the hard part for me. The music is so great. Um, there's a lot of funny parts, you know?

**Rileigh:** Yes, lot of funny parts.

**Sydnee:** It's very clever. A lot of funny bits. Um, but it's so sad.

**Rileigh:** Yeah. Um, it is very dark. Uh, especially towards the end.

**Taylor:** I feel like all the loss is all in service to the sort of lessons that the play is trying to get across, you know?

**Rileigh:** That's true. And to me, the best song in the whole show is "No One Is Alone," which happens towards the end when Cinderella is trying to comfort Little Red, who has just lost her mom and her grandma, and the baker is trying to comfort Jack, who has just found out his mom is dead. Um, so they're both singing to these children about how no one's really alone. It's very sweet.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Rileigh:** So, I mean, even though we've lost all these people by this point in the show, no one is alone. Sometimes people leave you halfway through the wood.

**Taylor:** [laughs quietly] That exact line always makes me cry. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** I know! I can't—

**Raleigh:** No one leaves for good!

**Sydnee:** I know!

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** I know, I can't think about that! I— you know, this is— thi—I— I never— I always thought it was kind of sad. But, like, as an adult I found it so heartbreakingly sad.

**Raleigh:** You are tearing up right now.

**Sydnee:** I know. Shut up.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Maybe it's— maybe it's 'cause I'm a mom. I don't know. Maybe it's the mom— the idea of, like, leaving my kids, and someone else singing to my kids, just makes me, like... wanna vomit, so. [laughs]

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Raleigh:** I will say also—

**Sydnee:** Like— like it makes me so sad and scared—

**Taylor:** "I'm so sad I could hurl." [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** Well, [laughs] yeah! I mean, like, that makes me—

**Raleigh:** "I'm too sad. Gotta get it out."



**Sydnee:** Like, I have a moment of just, like, panic and fear and existential dread, and I feel like I'm gonna vomit, so.

**Rileigh:** I will say, it also got a little bit tougher after Stephen Sondheim passed away, and that was one of the songs that people went back to to kind of, like, sing in his honor. About how, you know, sometimes people leave you, but no one leaves for good. Rough, man!

**Sydnee:** Yeah! I can't handle this!

**Rileigh:** When we started working on this show, he hadn't passed away, and then he— he did. It was like, "Oh, man." Now it just totally takes on a whole different... meaning. Um...

**Taylor:** You know, I do— I love, like, the sort of subtle picking apart of, like, fairy tale dynamics. Like, especially with the witch's song. I think this was the first time I really listened to her lyrics, "The Last Midnight". And, you know, like how much it's like, you know, there's always a witch. There's always a bad guy that you can blame everything on. But you're the ones that caused all these problems, you know? You're the ones that are looking for somebody to blame. Fine, you can blame me, but you're all causing your own problems.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** No, that's true. I mean, it does a really good job of, like, subverting those narratives. And, like— 'cause in a lot of those, we joke about how, like, those old fairy tales— they really were pretty gruesome. Um, and a lot of the moralizing in them isn't necessarily what we'd want to tell our kids today, you know?

A lot of the idea of, like, doing a bad thing and getting punished for it aren't... aren't really the lessons we teach children now, which are more like— I mean, I was just telling— Charlie and I were just having this conversation this morning about, you know, there's no such things as, like, a good person or a bad person. That we're people who do— we all have the capacity to do good things and bad things, and we all make choices, and just because you do— she was upset, 'cause she had— she hadn't listened to me about something, and she was like, "I'm a bad girl."

And I was like, "No. You just— yeah, I wish you had listened to me. I hope next time you will."

**Rileigh:** Charlie... [laughs quietly] gets mad at herself when she doesn't follow rules. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** She does! She beats herself up, and she'll immediately jump to that. "I'm a bad girl." And I try really hard to reinforce the idea that, like, "No. I don't think that was the best decision to make right now. [laughs quietly] I make bad decisions too. We all do. We're just humans."

**Rileigh:** Yeah. Um, which is very fitting that the last song of the whole show is "Children Will Listen".

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Rileigh:** That's, like, the whole... whole ending.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Rileigh:** Bernadette Peters, again, coming back to share that with us.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Rileigh:** Um...

**Sydnee:** Which is true. I mean, like— and I think that that again underscores why those fairy tales— and, I mean, we talk about it a lot, I think, in terms of the Disney movies. And, like, I know in our— in my little family, it becomes a lot of talk about the representation of women and, like, what a woman can be, and the older movies that sort of limit your options. [laughs] In terms of, like, you kind of wait and sing and chat with birds until a guy rescues you.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] Um...

**Rileigh:** You know... [sighs] that's why I feel like this musical— I'm always— I'm caught— I know it's, you know, not a recent musical. But I'm always caught off guard when I remember it's from 1986, because it feels like... Act 1 is very much kind of following those stereotypes from typical fairy tales, like Cinderella is, you know, at the ball, falls in love with the prince, the birds help her get there and then, you know, falls in love and gets married to the prince.

Um, but Act 2 kind of just subverts all of that, and gives women agency over their own lives, and even, I mean, a character like the baker's wife... she has an affair. And, like, sings a whole song about how great that prince is and how she wants to, like, you know... have fun with a prince while also having, like, her baker and her baby, but you're going back and forth about, like, what you should and what you, you know, would do. Um, that I feel like was, I mean... it was pretty modern to have a woman singing about, like, having agency over who she wants to be with.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Rileigh:** And what she does with her body.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. I mean, it definitely is a very modern idea, and it is something that... and we've talked about stuff like this on the show before... we accept in male characters, because that's always been— men have always been given multiple dimensions, and allowed to... kind of like— men have always been allowed to not be good or bad, but be somewhere in between.

**Rileigh:** Yep.

**Sydnee:** And capable of redemption at any point, and... you know, women aren't, traditionally.

**Rileigh:** Which—[sighs] reminded me, I wanted to note that usually in every production, the wolf and Cinderella's prince are played by the same person.

**Sydnee:** Hmm.

**Rileigh:** In all the stage productions, they're written to be played by the same person, and if there's an option to add a second wolf, then that second wolf will be played by Rapunzel's prince, which is... uh, interesting to me, because they do paint the princes to be... I don't wanna say "the bad guys," 'cause I don't think

there's anyone in the show that's intended to be, like, the bad guy. I think that's kind of the point, that there isn't.

Um, but they're definitely kind of portrayed to be jerks that aren't, you know, doing nice, good things. Um, but they're only ever identified by the woman whose prince they are, which...

**Sydnee:** That's interesting, yeah.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Even with the— I really like the— the Little Red Riding Hood wolf part, because I think that song she sings afterwards— it's not like, just, "Oh, you strayed from the path. You did a bad." It's like, "Well, I saw a bunch of cool stuff, but I also got—[wheezes] got eaten."

It's not, like, fully the— the moral end of the story. It's kind of like, yeah, there are people that will lead you astray in life. Being lead astray isn't always bad, but it can have consequences. So, you know.

**Raleigh:** Right.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. I mean, exactly. 'Cause it's reflecting that choices are never right-wrong. Well, I don't wanna say "never." Rarely right-wrong, good-bad.

**Raleigh:** It's a— it's a scale.

**Sydnee:** There— it's a lot more like risk benefit. [laughs quietly] You know? It's a balance.

**Raleigh:** Yeah. Yeah. Um...

**Sydnee:** Um, yeah. I think the princes are probably by today's— I don't think you would've said this in 1986, but by today's standards we would say they're sort of, like, toxic masculinity.

**Raleigh:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** Which is, in and of itself, is not their fault, per se?

**Raleigh:** Well, he— Cinderella's prince says "I was raised to be charming, not sincere." He pretty much says, like, "Hey, this is just, like, a product of our [laughs quietly] society, man."

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Raleigh:** "Like, that's just who I was told I was supposed to be. Sorry!"

**Taylor:** I do love the way that the movie films agony.

**Raleigh:** Me too. [laughs]

**Taylor:** I don't know if it was originally meant to be that comedic, [through laughter] but it's very funny.

**Raleigh:** They really play into it. I mean, they don't change the words or anything. It's all the same, but they really play into the idea of toxic masculinity. These guys just being so obsessed with themselves that they're, like— I mean, it's Chris Pine just, like, ripping his shirt open in a waterfall, singing about how he's in agony that this princess doesn't love him. Oh, man. It's so good.

There— there are several things about the movie adaptation, I will say, that I don't necessarily love. Um, it's just whenever you're turning a musical into a movie that started as a musical, and you're not just filming a stage production, like, you're changing it to be, like, a motion picture, I feel like there are always some things you lose. But that is one of the things that I do very much enjoy about the movie version specifically. And, I mean, Meryl Streep is the witch in the movie version, so there's also that.

**Sydnee:** Which, I mean, I feel like it was a good choice in the sense that if you're going to— if Bernadette Peters is the standard, and now—

**Raleigh:** And you're not gonna use Bernadette Peters. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** I think Meryl Streep is the only other option you've got, you know? Like, then there you go. 'Cause nobody is ever gonna watch a Meryl Streep performance and be like, "I'm disappointed."

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] Like, no. That was amazing. Okay. Alright. That's fine.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Just you two, though.

**Raleigh:** Right. [laughs] Just Meryl and Bernadette.

**Sydnee:** That's it! [laughs] If there's somebody else at some point, I'll let you know. But for now...

**Raleigh:** Just you two. That is why I'm very glad of all the musicals that— there are very few where you can watch professionally filmed stage productions. Just, like, you know, out there, you can buy them, rent them or whatever, watch them.

Um, I'm glad that this is one of them that you can, 'cause I— there is the movie version, and I think for a lot of people it makes the story more accessible. Um, who— maybe people who wouldn't typically go see a musical, but would go— I mean, it was a Disney movie, so who would go see a Disney movie. I don't know if they did a good job conveying that it's not for kids. 'Cause it does say that it has Cinderella in it, and it is a Disney movie.

**Sydnee:** Yeah...

**Raleigh:** They don't make it clear that it's... not... not for babies. Um...

**Sydnee:** No. I think that's always been difficult with *Into the Woods*, 'cause the first act is very much for kids.

**Raleigh:** Yeah. I mean, if you wanna— if you're gonna bring Charlie and Cooper, you should bring 'em for Act 1 and leave at intermission. Like, that's how this— "That's how it ends! That's how the story ends!"

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Are you kidding me?

**Raleigh:** "Everyone's happy!"

**Sydnee:** You think Cooper'll let me take her out of there—

**Raleigh:** You're right.

**Sydnee:** —before the bleeding starts?

**Raleigh:** Cooper would love that. [laughs] There are people that get squooshed, and smooshed.

**Sydnee:** People get their eyes pecked out, and people get squooshed. She is going to love this show.

**Raleigh:** She's gonna love that. You're right. She's gonna— the giant's gonna be her favorite character. The lady giant in Act 2. She's gonna love that.

**Sydnee:** Do you know how many games on Roblox involve somebody— some sort of beloved character being a murderer? And I know because Cooper finds them all.

**Raleigh:** I know because Cooper. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Raleigh:** Um... yeah.

**Sydnee:** Anyway, I'm just hoping she wants to go into medicine, and not...

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** Hmm...

**Raleigh:** [through laughter] Serial killing?

**Sydnee:** Not serial killing.

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** Maybe writing. Maybe fiction. [laughs]

**Rileigh:** Yeah, there you go.

**Sydnee:** She actually— she told me this morning she wants to be a storyteller when she grows up.

**Taylor:** That's cool.

**Rileigh:** Wow!

**Sydnee:** That was the word she used, "storyteller."

**Rileigh:** "Storyteller."

**Sydnee:** I said— I said, like, "Books, movies, TV? What do you wanna do? Like, how— how— are you gonna write the songs? Like, there's so many ways to tell stories." And she was like—

**Taylor:** Cut out letters from magazines, glue it on a piece of paper.

**Rileigh:** [laughs loudly]

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** Cryptic messages that take decades to decipher that I send to newspapers.

**Taylor:** Yeah, you know.

[all laugh]

**Sydnee:** Some will be smeared in blood on walls.

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** Hmm.



**Sydnee:** Of abandoned houses.

**Taylor:** It's like an ARG, but it's reality reality.

**Raleigh:** [laughs] Just an R-G?

**Taylor:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Eesh. No, she just said, "Just a storyteller." And I said, "Okay."

**Raleigh:** That's good.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Raleigh:** She's good at telling stories now, so.

**Sydnee:** She is. She told me a very long story this morning.

**Raleigh:** But yeah. Thank you all for watching *Into the Woods* with me. It's certainly not... I don't wanna say it's not a fun watch, 'cause I do think it is enjoyable, especially if you're someone that likes musicals, um, as we all, I think, do.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Raleigh:** Um, but it is— I mean, it does get sad and dark. Very meaningful, deep, towards the end. Um, obviously if you're going to watch it and you haven't watched it... there is death, so. I mean, you don't, like, watch anyone die, but there is— you know, the characters do die.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, people die.

**Raleigh:** Um, so that's something to keep in mind.

**Sydnee:** But yeah. But the music is wonderful, and like I said, it's very clever. It's funny. It's an enjoyable thing to watch. Just sad.

**Raleigh:** And again, I would recommend that if you're going to choose one or the other to watch, if you like musicals, I would recommend that you watch the Bernadette Peters version, not the Anna Kendrick, James Corden version. Um...

**Sydnee:** Yeah. I would echo that.

**Raleigh:** Yeah. But, I mean, they both have their... merits. I suppose.

**Sydnee:** [laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** I'm sorry! Ever since—

**Sydnee:** That was so good. Like, such a theater snob.

**Raleigh:** Ever since— no, I'm sorry!

**Sydnee:** "[mockingly] But they both have their... "

**Raleigh:** Ever since James Corden—

**Sydnee:** "I suppose."

**Raleigh:** —was one of those dancing mice-turned-people in the new Cinderella... that was, like, an Amazon Prime exclusive...

**Taylor:** Ohh...

**Sydnee:** Yeah?

**Raleigh:** I just can't... I can't watch anything he's in without thinking about him as a mi— a mouse person.

**Sydnee:** I thought you were gonna say when he was in *Cats*, the movie.

**Raleigh:** That too!

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Raleigh:** That too.

**Taylor:** I was gonna say, is that— that's when you drew the line? The mouse?  
[laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** Both, honestly. I forgot he was in *Cats*.

**Sydnee:** [simultaneously] That *Cats* movie.

**Raleigh:** See, now I can't stop thinking about that. And he's the baker in *Into the Woods* in the movie, and that's, like, the main character, so he's in, like, everything. And all I can think of is him in that CGI costume, or the CGI mouse costume. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** My kids love that *Cats* movie.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** It's so sad.

**Raleigh:** That makes sense.

**Taylor:** Oh no.

**Sydnee:** They love—[laughs]

**Taylor:** How many times have you watched it?

**Sydnee:** I don't wanna think about how many times I've watched it.

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** And then they were all disappointed that the whole thing about the—the butthole cut? Did you hear about that? People—

**Raleigh:** Oh, yes.

**Sydnee:** It was a joke that there was a— that they had to edit out all the CGI buttholes from the cats.

**Raleigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** And they were saying "Release the butthole cut."

**Raleigh:** [muffled laughter]

**Sydnee:** And Charlie and Cooper were like, "We wanna see the one with the buttholes!"

And I was like, "There isn't— that's a joke! There isn't one that—" they still will sometimes ask, "Can we see the *Cats* with the buttholes?" I'm like, "No, there isn't one! And why do you wanna see that?!"

**Raleigh:** Hey, you know, Taylor Swift's in it too, so.

**Sydnee:** This is true.

**Raleigh:** She wrote a song for it.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm. It's a good song.

**Raleigh:** It is a good song.

**Sydnee:** It actually is a good song.

**Raleigh:** So there's that. She's always come— we're always within one degree of Taylor Swift.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** [laughs]

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

**Sydnee:** Um...

[pause]

**Raleigh:** You forgot?!

**Sydnee:** How do I do this? Every time I decide what I'm gonna do, and then I forget before the end of the... ah, okay. Next time—

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** —we're gonna talk about the movie *Mermaids*.

**Taylor:** There you go.

**Raleigh:** You decided 46 minutes ago what you were gonna do.

**Sydnee:** There's— my— the— listen. There's a lot going on in there right now.

**Raleigh:** Oh my gosh.

**Sydnee:** It's just a big— it's a big jumble.

**Raleigh:** Anyways, *Mermaids*.

**Sydnee:** *Mermaids*. The movie *Mermaids*, starring Cher.

**Taylor:** Not involving any actual mermaids.

**Sydnee:** No.

**Raleigh:** No.

**Sydnee:** It's great. Uh, thank you, Raleigh.

**Raleigh:** Thank you.

**Sydnee:** I enjoyed *Into the Woods*. You should— as Raleigh said, you should watch *Into the Woods*. Or if you don't have time, you could call our mom—

**Raleigh:** [laughs loudly]

**Sydnee:** —and she will recount the plot [laughs] of *Into the Woods* for you.

**Raleigh:** It'll only take about half the length of the real *Into the Woods*.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** [laughs] Again, I love you, mom. I'm just joking. [laughs] She's gonna listen and get mad at me.

**Rileigh:** I know.

**Sydnee:** I know.

**Taylor:** Oh no.

**Sydnee:** I know. Alright. Well, thank you all. Uh, you can tweet at us @stillbuff. You can email us at stillbuffering@maximumfun.org. And, um, you should go to Maximumfun.org and listen to all the great podcasts that are there. I'm sure you'll enjoy them. And thank you to The Nouvellas for our theme song, "Baby You Change Your Mind".

**Rileigh:** This has been your cross-generational guide to the culture that made us. I'm Rileigh Smirl.

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

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

**Rileigh:** I am still buffering...

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

[theme music plays]

**Sydnee:** You gonna give us a little snippet of something, or...?

**Rileigh:** [singing] The cow as white as milk, the cape as red as blood, the hair as yellow as corn, the slipper as pure as gold. [speaking] That's all you gotta know.

**Sydnee:** Alright.

**Rileigh:** Or just [singing] into the woods. [speaking] And that's like half the songs in the show.

**Sydnee:** [singing] Out of the woods.

**Rileigh:** Just "Into."

[all laugh]

[music plays]

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[music and ad end]

[chord]

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