

## Still Buffering 310: "The Last Unicorn" (1982)

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[theme music plays]

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

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

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

**Sydnee:** So, it is, uh, the extension of the MaxFunDrive. We're in a special time period right now.

**Rileigh:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** That is— that is why our episode is being released a day late. It is not because I have what I think is the flu? I don't know if it's the flu.

**Rileigh:** Definitely not COVID.

**Sydnee:** It's not COVID. I've taken several COVID tests. It's not COVID. It doesn't feel— well, I haven't had COVID. It doesn't seem to fit— I think I have the flu. I haven't gone to get tested 'cause I'm not that sick. But, um, I was sick enough that I could not record.

**Rileigh:** Which is pretty sick for Syd.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. Yeah, I generally don't take days off, but I did. And, uh, it's great, because that— it was intentional, and we wanted to release a special extended MaxFunDrive, extended episo— not— like, the episode will be the normal length.

**Rileigh:** Extended cut, but not because of the length, but just because of the— the time frame.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Rileigh:** Right?

**Sydnee:** This is like the secret song on the end of an album.

**Raleigh:** Exactly. Except it's just two extra days.

**Sydnee:** Don't— you didn't listen to the end of the MaxFunDrive. You had to listen to the extension of the MaxFunDrive.

**Raleigh:** There you go.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, that's right. Anyway, it's still the MaxFunDrive. You are not too late. If you have not joined at [Maximumfun.org/join](http://Maximumfun.org/join), you still can. MaxFunDrive is the one time a year, if you don't know, when we come to our listeners— who support us, by the way. We're a listener-supported, listener-funded network.

Uh, we come to you and say "Hey, if you like what we do, if you enjoy our shows, if you enjoy this content, if you wanna make sure we keep making it and can make more of it and improve upon it, uh, we ask you to join Maximum Fun and give us a little bit of your hard earned money." Um, because it's nice to support the things you love, if you can.

There are lots of levels at which you can join. You can join at a \$5 level and you get all the bonus content. What, are you asking, is the bonus content? Every year during MaxFunDrive, all the shows add extra content to a secret...

**Raleigh:** Secret feed.

**Sydnee:** ... a secret feed that you can only get to if you're at that \$5 a month level.

**Raleigh:** And you get all the feed from all the years.

**Sydnee:** Yes. Everything, everything. Over 300 hours of BoCo. Uh, just for you. Uh, there's a \$10 level where you can get one of our show's patches. You get to pick which one you want. They're all amazing. The *Still Buffering* one is especially amazing, in my opinion.

**Raleigh:** We won the Max Fun yearbook award for most likely to appear on a kick butt denim jacket, so...

**Sydnee:** There you go.

**Raleigh:** There you go.

**Sydnee:** It's perfect.

**Raleigh:** So you know you want it.

**Sydnee:** It's perfect for jackets, for messenger bags, for backpacks, for bucket hats, whatever you want to put it on. And there are higher levels as well, and we'll tell you more about those gifts later in the show, but don't wait. Right now, [Maximumfun.org/join](https://Maximumfun.org/join). It is your chance to, uh, you know, give what you can, help us keep doing what we love to do, and what you— we hope— love to listen to.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Uh, so... with that being said, Teylor, what are we talking about this week?

**Teylor:** Uh, we are talking about *The Last Unicorn*, a 1982 animated movie that I happen to like.

**Sydnee:** Uh, Tey, I didn't realize that this movie was made by Rankin and Bass.

**Teylor:** By who?

**Sydnee:** The same team that did a lot of the animated, like, Christmas, like, holiday movies that we all love.

**Teylor:** Ohh, yeah.

**Sydnee:** I never made that connection. I didn't know that until Justin pointed it out to me when we were watching it. He said, "Did you realize that this was one of theirs?" 'Cause, we, you know, a lot of— if there's some sort of classic holiday animated thing you love, it was probably Rankin and Bass.

**Raleigh:** Hm.

**Teylor:** That's interesting.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm. A very different style. But... still. I just thought that was really interesting.

**Taylor:** I do know it was based off of a book. It was based off a novel that came out a few decades earlier. It came out in, like, '68, by Peter S. Beagle. He also wrote the screenplay as well.

**Rileigh:** Now, did the book have that many songs? Like, did it, like, sing as you read, or...?

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** No, no, it was not a... not a musical...

**Rileigh:** Not a musical book.

**Taylor:** No.

**Rileigh:** Um, I was impressed by the sheer number of songs, because most animated movies... even, like, the Disney ones now, that are like, quote, unquote, "musical movies" that have all the songs, they don't even have that many. It's usually like, you know, two or three big ones.

**Sydnee:** Well, and typically if they do it's a character singing, and not, as there are throughout *The Last Unicorn*, scenes of just sort of, like... it's almost like a music video. It's like a song playing while these beautiful images of the unicorn or the forest, or whatever the scene is.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** An eagle soaring. [laughs]

**Taylor:** Yeah. It's— it sort of has that same, like— they do that in *Fern Gully* too, where it's like, here's— sometimes the characters sing. Sometimes it's just... like, a cool ambient song about the rainforest in the background. [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** Yeah. It— for some reason— and the music isn't this at all— I don't know why, but I had the thought several times watching it this time, like, this is kind of metal? And I don't know why. [laughs quietly] Like— like you know the soft side of metal? Which is about, like— like— [laughs]

**Taylor:** What?

**Sydnee:** Like so— you know what I mean? It reminded me of, um... because I've watched this with the girls so many times, "The Night Begins To Shine" *Teen Titans Go!* collection of episodes.

**Raleigh:** They love those.

**Sydnee:** Where it's just like these— like, they basically took, like, album art and turned it into multiple episodes of a cartoon. And there's something very awesome about it. And, like, sort of— I was gonna say bad with a bad word there, but I can't say that word. Butt. Bad butt.

There's something sort of, like— 'cause, like, the eagle, and then the unicorn, and then the Red Bull, and like it's all very, like, cool. I don't know. And then the music is real soft, and... I don't know. It's very 80's, either way.

**Taylor:** Yeah. Well, 'cause there were all those other sort of— uh, I mean, they were more for adults— like, metal aesthetic animated movies that came out I feel like around the same time period, about, like, wizards and stuff, and dragons that, you know...

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Had the—

**Raleigh:** It's—

**Taylor:** — very sexy animation. [laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** They do, yeah. They do. I mean, that's definitely part of it.

**Raleigh:** And it's not an animated one, but it gave me *Labyrinth* vibes also.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** Mm-hmm, yeah.

**Rileigh:** I was like "This feels like they would be in the background of David Bowie doing some... some magic."

**Sydnee:** Now, who was this— and Tey, you might not know the answer to this, but I don't know. Was this supposed— who was this for? Was it supposed to be for kids, or was this an attempt to make something animated for an older audience? Because it reads older to me.

**Taylor:** Well, that's what— I thought that was interesting. 'Cause, I mean, I remember watching it as a kid, of course. Like, I thought this was for kids, and then watching it again as an adult, like, "Oh, I don't... there's a lot of stuff here that... " it's not... not— it's not bad for kids to see. But they say some bad words, you know? There's some... there's some boobs. There's some— [laughs] some nudity. Uh, I don't know. I'm not really sure. Like, it premiered in theaters. So... I don't know if it was intended as a kid's movie.

**Rileigh:** I mean, this was my first time watching it, and I didn't— you get that feeling when you're watching a kid's movie or kid's TV show. Like, "Ah. This is not for me." I didn't necessarily get that, watching this. 'Cause, I mean, I'm watching it for the first time as a 21-year-old adult. And I was like, "Oh, okay. I'm into it."

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, it definitely— and I mean, I remember as a kid knowing that it was about something else, or feeling like that. Like, thinking there's a level to this I'm not getting, but also still not getting it. [laughs] Like, I feel like there's something else happening, and I don't know what it is.

**Taylor:** I still feel that way when I watch it. Like, I think that there's— I don't know. I don't think it's trying to just have, like, a tidy little, you know... I mean, I'm not hating on animated movies that have tidy little messages. But, you know, usually you kind of can distill it down to a sentence, you know?

Like, *Frozen's* about finding your true self, you know? There's other messages there but, like, it's very con— I don't— what is *The Last Unicorn* really saying at the end? I don't... I think it's just more of, like, a... it's more of just a fairy tale. Like, this is just, you know...

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

**Rileigh:** I was gonna say, Tey, do you wanna give, like, a quick summary rundown maybe, for anyone who's unfamiliar?

**Taylor:** Uh, yes. *The Last Unicorn*, well, it tells the story of the last unicorn, so that is our main character. Voiced by Mia Farrow.

**Rileigh:** Ohh.

**Taylor:** Uh, and she discovers she's the last unicorn, so she tries to seek out what happened to all the other unicorns. Um, and that leads her on this sort of path to the Red Bull, who has captured, driven all the unicorns into the sea. Uh, and along the way she meets sort of her traveling party.

There's a not very good wizard, there's Molly Grue who's just, I don't know, like a cool middle-aged lady. [laughs]

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Uh, and they end up at this King Haggard, who's this angry old king who's the reason that all the unicorns have been captured. He— he kind of possesses the Red Bull, and she— she challenges the Red Bull and sets all the other unicorns free. Uh, in the process she's turned into a human, briefly. And while she's a human she falls in love with a prince, and then has to sort of let him go, regains her form. I don't know, a lot happens.

**Rileigh:** Yeah. I told— Cooper was there watching it, and I told Cooper— she pointed at the unicorn, but in lady form and was like, "She's so pretty." And I was like, "And she's a unicorn." And Cooper was like, "What— what?"

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** "That— h— sorry?" She could not process. She was like, "That's not right." Like, yeah. Yeah. It's true.

**Sydnee:** That is— remember the unicorn from earlier in the film? [laughs]

**Rileigh:** Yep. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** That's definitely her.

**Taylor:** I mean—

**Raleigh:** Um—

**Taylor:** Oh, go ahead.

**Raleigh:** No, go ahead.

**Taylor:** Well, I was gonna say, when I was a kid... I mean, and still, honestly, like, Lady Amalthea to me was the most beautiful woman that ever lived, that ever existed. That was the pinnacle of beauty to me, was Lady Amalthea, the transfigured unicorn.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** She really is. I will say, though— and this still reads the same to me— and I always remember thinking, like, I feel like that's something I'm not understanding. The unicorn horn— like, the pattern around the base of it and then the same pattern that's on her head when she's in human form always looked so painful to me. There was something about it that made my head hurt.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** I don't know. I would look at it and think, like, "Oh, this is painful. This is important. I don't know why. I don't understand." [laughs]

**Raleigh:** It reminded me of the Infinity Stone that's in Vision's head.

**Taylor:** Oh, yeah, yeah.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Raleigh:** It's like, there— that's her Infinity Stone. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Yeah. Or Harry Potter's scar.

**Rileigh:** Yeah. What's up with things on foreheads?

**Sydnee:** I don't know. Well, I mean—

**Taylor:** Aesthetic. I don't know.

**Sydnee:** I mean, she had a horn.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Rileigh:** Well...

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** Okay. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** What was worse was the fake horn.

**Rileigh:** Hmm.

**Taylor:** Mmm, yeah.

**Sydnee:** That the— that she gets—

**Taylor:** That Mama Fortuna puts on her?

**Sydnee:** Yeah. That— that was always worse to me. That looked awful.

**Rileigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** That looked like... I don't know. The way that, um, Wolverine's claws look when they... [laughs quietly]

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** When they, like, shwoop out?

**Sydnee:** Yeah. And you— like, you feel like they're cutting— are they cutting his skin every time he does that?

**Taylor:** Yeah, 'cause he has healing powers, so they do.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. Okay. That was my assumption, is that his skin was getting cut every time. That's how that horn looks. It looks like it cut on its way out. It always— I mean, I'm not saying it did. I just mean it looked painful.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Then she's momentarily not a unicorn, right? [stammers]... what's a... two horns. What is that?

**Sydnee:** Binicorn.

**Raleigh:** Binicorn?

**Taylor:** Binicorn.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** Hmm, okay. That just sounds gay, but alright.

**Sydnee:** That's a different podcast.

**Raleigh:** Would it just be bicorn? 'Cause u— uni is, like, once. It's like the U-N-I is all from the one, so if you take that out and make it bi, isn't it just bicorn?

**Taylor:** It's a bicorn. [laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** [laughs] Like bi— [laughs quietly] bisexual corn.

**Taylor:** That's what that sounds like.

[all laugh]

**Sydnee:** I don't know. Isn't the... I don't wanna reference other... I'm not stealing from other podcasts. Isn't— on TAZ, don't they call it a binicorn?

**Raleigh:** I'm just saying, like, but...

**Sydnee:** This is me all the way— also revealing that I do not listen to my [wheezes] husband's podcast. Which is not— don't take it personally! I almost never listen to any podcasts, 'cause I just don't— I don't have any sort of commute or time to listen to podcasts.

**Rileigh:** I now have an English degree, so I'm just saying, like, you know, according to the English language, correct— the correct pronunciation—

**Taylor:** [simultaneously] Oh no.

**Rileigh:** — and creation of the word would— that that'd just be bicorn.

**Sydnee:** This could start a podcast war if this is true. I've read the graphic novels, so certainly, I should remember— I don't remember. Garyl, if he's a binicorn.

**Taylor:** Binicorn just sounds better. I think that's— I think that's probably the reason.

**Rileigh:** It does sound better.

**Sydnee:** Either way, we can agree it's a bisexual mythical creature.

**Taylor:** Yes.

**Rileigh:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** [laughs quietly] I mean, I think that's fine. I feel like this movie has absolutely no gay content, and yet it feels very gay, so that's probably fine.

**Rileigh:** It does!

**Taylor:** Can't explain why. Don't know.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Maybe part of the message there... [laughs]

**Sydnee:** I would definitely add this to the collection of things that, like, "This is ours. I don't know why this is ours, but this is ours." [laughs]

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Yeah. Well, I also think, like, absolutely, like, the first time I saw, like, Lady Amalthea in the human form I'm like, "Oh, that's a beautiful lady. No-no-no, I don't wanna look like Lady Amalthea. I— I love Lady Amalthea."

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Raleigh:** [laughs] Yeah. I also hadn't noticed until you just were talking about it, Tey, but there is the Red Bull in this show.

**Taylor:** Yes.

**Raleigh:** Like— like— like the drink. The Red Bull.

**Taylor:** Not— I think this predates Red Bull.

**Sydnee:** I think you're right, yeah.

**Raleigh:** So— so did Red Bull... is this from...

**Sydnee:** [laughs loudly]

**Raleigh:** Is this the origin story for Red Bull?

**Taylor:** I don't think so, because I'm pretty sure... wasn't Red Bull— didn't it originate in the UK?

**Sydnee:** Oh, I don't know the story of Red Bull.

**Taylor:** I don't actually know, either. Now that— that also sounds like something for another podcast, but— [laughs]

**Raleigh:** But it gives you— it gives you wings, so in my head I was like, "Oh. Maybe it's..." "

**Sydnee:** Well, I will say, though... I mean, if you think about, like— we all just accept Red Bull. But if you start to think about, like, this is a drink that is made to just, like... hype you up, with what is, like— I mean, it's a stimulant.

**Taylor:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** And it's not— I mean, it doesn't give you energy in, like, a positive way, necessarily.

**Raleigh:** Oh, no.

**Sydnee:** Right? Like, it's a stimulant. Um, and it's— that is what its intent is, is like, just hype yourself up. Feel kind of anxious and jittery but don't fall asleep is, like, the message of any sort of energy caffeine-based drink.

**Raleigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** And they called it Red Bull, so its entire existence is sort of— like if you step back from it and look, oh, that's a wild thing that we just have, that we just all accept and order with vodka periodically. Like, that's a wild thing.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** It would make sense to me that it would be inspired... [laughs]

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** ... by this movie! You know? Like if you were watching this and it was back in the 80's, and maybe you were using a substance... I don't know. We weren't, 'cause none of us were born when this movie came out. But maybe you were. [laughs] And then you were like, "I'm gonna make a drink! [laughs] And I'm gonna call it Red Bull! And it's gonna give you energy!"

Doesn't that fit?

**Taylor:** I mean, that's a... that's a good workaround. It's not true. Uh, I just briefly looked up the history of Red Bull. That's not where the name comes from.

**Sydnee:** [sighs heavily] Where does it really come from?

**Taylor:** It originally— the recipe originates in Thailand, and the original name translates to Red Gaur, which is a type of Indian bull— or Indian bison. So, uh— so it was just... just a translated, you know, version of the original name.

**Sydnee:** Interesting.

**Taylor:** I think Red Bull itself started in Austria. Um...

**Sydnee:** Um, well, I had no idea.

**Taylor:** So— so no ties to the animated film, unfortunately. [laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** Well.

**Sydnee:** Well, I... that makes more sense, what you're saying. [laughs quietly] I like—

**Raleigh:** Is it as fun?

**Sydnee:** It's not as fun. [laughs] But... but that makes more sense.

**Taylor:** Well. Sorry to disappoint. I mean, it would be— I think if you were gonna make a drink inspired by *The Last Unicorn*, it would be obvious to use some Red Bull.

**Sydnee:** What if you made, like, a drink that was really soothing and relaxing and called it *The Last Unicorn*? And sold it alongside Red Bull?

**Taylor:** Like something that's, like, supposed to calm you down? One of the—

**Sydnee:** Something with chamomile or lavender or something.

**Raleigh:** And then you chase it with Red Bull?

**Taylor:** No! No.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** Yeah. Right?

**Taylor:** Oh, that's not how that works at all.

**Rileigh:** Like how the Red Bull drove out the unicorns? So, like, you chase the unicorn with the... the Red Bull.

**Sydnee:** Please, no, this is what it is! This is what it is. This is gonna be a new brand of vodka.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** Red Bull vodka?

**Taylor:** Wait! But that is—

**Sydnee:** Have you never heard of that drink?

**Rileigh:** Well, yeah! I thought you meant, like, a brand of...

**Sydnee:** No! *Last Unicorn* vodka.

**Rileigh:** Oh, okay.

**Taylor:** That is really funny, though, 'cause you said as a chaser. Like, make a cocktail called *The Last Unicorn*, and then have it served with a back of Red Bull. It's like, oh, it's a Red Bull chaser! [laughs]

**Rileigh:** That's exactly what I was thinking.

**Taylor:** That's really funny!

[all laugh]

**Sydnee:** Uh, in certain circles that drink would go over so well.

**Rileigh:** So well!

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** This is— we talk about movies a lot that, like, was this a big thing in general, or was this just a big thing to me? And I feel like... *The Last Unicorn* is one of those movies that I don't know a lot of people that saw it and loved it as much as... I don't know. Sydnee, did you even have the same fixation on it that I did? Or was that just me?

**Sydnee:** Um, I did— so, not to the degree that you did. I did really like— it was one of those that had a huge impact on me. Um, but it also, because of what I was referencing, like, I felt that it was trying to tell me something that I couldn't understand. I also had this sort of... I don't wanna say negative, because it wasn't that I didn't enjoy it. It made me kind of sad.

**Taylor:** It is— yeah.

**Sydnee:** And— and a little scared in a way that I couldn't quite put my finger on as a child, 'cause I was like, it's telling me something about innocence or, like, death, or so— there's something in here that I don't get. And so I had this sort of, like— I didn't re-watch it as much as you did because it made me sad in a way I didn't understand yet.

**Taylor:** Hmm. Well, I've met— it's only in, like, other— like, specific, like, other weird art kids that are like, "Oh, yeah. I was obsessed with *The Last Unicorn*." Like, it's not— I don't think it had the broad impact that I assumed it had when I was younger. I thought everybody must've seen this movie. But I have met people, and it's like, the people that loved *The Last Unicorn* really loved it.  
[laughs]

**Sydnee:** Well, I think that for a lot of the reasons that we've talked about, I do think it connected. If you were a certain type of— especially if you were, uh... I don't know. If you were a kind of kid like we were where, like, we were looking for those sort of, like, deeper, adult kind of... I don't know. Like, I want to understand these things and I don't. We were both big readers, you know? Searching for those things as kids.

**Raleigh:** That's why Uncle Michael showed me a lot of *Family Guy*.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** Yeah, you were looking for those big thoughts.

**Raleigh:** Yeah. I was looking for the adult messages.

**Sydnee:** I feel like we were both like that, though. Like, looking for those big things. And I'm not saying you weren't, Raleigh, but you weren't around for this movie.

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

**Sydnee:** Uh— [laughs] and, like, this movie really satisfied that. Like, I'm hitting on something larger here. And I'm getting clues. I'm getting clues to something. And this takes me a step closer.

**Taylor:** It's kind of a bummer, like, the things that do make sense now, that I knew made me sad as a kid but I didn't know why, and now I'm like, "Oh, I get it now." Like, I watched the movie— I re-watched the movie the other night, like, after a very long, very bad shift at the restaurant I'm working at. And, like, the "Man's Road" song that comes on? [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Taylor:** I just, like— just sitting alone in my apartment crying to that song, 'cause it's like, yeah.

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** [through laughter] It's hard out here. You don't know what's coming for you, sweet little unicorn. You don't know the truths you're going to have to learn.

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** The songs are really— like, a lot of them are quite sad, if you watch the— I had, um, just because we always do, in this house, I always have subtitles on everything we watch, because there's usually kids yelling and screaming, and other pads going, and Roblox being played, and random noises. So I always have subtitles on. And so, like, all the lyrics to the songs were going across the screen at the same time, and it was like, "Whoa!" [laughs quietly]

**Rileigh:** That's deep.

**Sydnee:** "Whoa, man." [laughs]

**Taylor:** Well, in, like, the broader sense— I mean, we kind of talked about it. The message is hard to decipher but, I mean, there is the whole concept of, like... can immortal beings truly experience, like... like, feelings, to the same degree that mortals do? Because part of feelings, I think, come from, like, the fact that life is fleeting, but things are temporary.

I think that— it implies that that's part of— part of our humanity comes from the fact that we will die one day. That part of our ability to love and care and regret and feel things comes from the fact that we are momentary creatures, and that a unicorn's immortal, and so it can't experience those feelings, so this unicorn is forever changed because she experiences regret, which is something that is not offered up to immortals. That's a big thing for, like, [through laughter] little kids to wrap their heads around!

**Sydnee:** It's huge, and would be tackled many years later in *The Good Place*, that exact idea.

**Rileigh:** Are you—

**Sydnee:** The thing the you need to understand about humans is that they're a little bit sad all the time.

**Rileigh:** Are you suggesting that *The Good Place* was a continuation of the messages brought on by *The Last Unicorn*?

**Taylor:** At least existed in the same universe.

**Sydnee:** Well, before we address that...

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

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

**Sydnee:** I need to tell you all a little bit more about the MaxFunDrive. As I already mentioned, it is that time of year. The MaxFunDrive. Once a year, the Maximum Fun network, all of our family of podcasts, we come together, we reach out to you, our listening audience, and we say "Hey, can you help us out?"

Uh, we are a listener-supported network. We make content and hand it out for free, and we do have ads occasionally, but largely we are supported by you, our listeners. You give us a little bit of your hard-earned money— or a lot a bit, whatever you can manage— and we keep creating shows for you, hopefully new shows, better shows. We can improve our audio equipment, we can devote more time to developing creative new content, researching for some of the shows that require research, purchasing. I can tell you, for another show I do, not plugging on this show...

**Raleigh:** Uh-huh.

**Sydnee:** ... uh, that it can be expensive to purchase, like, articles for research projects, and new te— original primary texts and things like that, and all of that is stuff that your dollars help us do.

In addition, Teylor, Raleigh, I know both of your lives have been improved by our listeners and their— and their support.

**Raleigh:** Yeah. Um, I would not be able to go to law school, and go to law school where I am going to law school in DC in the fall and do so, you know, in a way that is not stressful in trying to figure out how to get a job while I'm there, also doing law school and all that kind of stuff. Um, taking out more loans than I already am for tuition. I'm able to do all that because of this show, and I would not be doing that if not for this show. And all of our supporters.

**Teylor:** Yeah. And I, uh— [laughs quietly] mentioned I work at a restaurant. I have worked in restaurants for 50 to 60 hours my entire adult life, and for the past few years I haven't had to work quite so much, because of y'all out there, which has been really nice. Especially through the pandemic, where restaurant work was pretty hard to find. Uh, this podcast was the only thing keeping the lights on. So, uh, I am definitely deeply, deeply appreciative to all of you who support us.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** And this is the time to support us. Because during the MaxFunDrive, if you either join for the first time, start a monthly support for the first time, or you upgrade your membership—that's the other way that you can get a gift, is if you're already a member at the \$5 level but you feel like it's been a year where you can afford to bump up to the \$10 level, or if you're at 10 and you can go up to 20, whatever. Um, if you can upgrade your membership, then you also get gifts, so either way counts. Um, at [Maximumfun.org/join](http://Maximumfun.org/join).

But what are some of the gifts, Raleigh, that people can get?

**Raleigh:** Well, I'm glad you asked, Sydnee. Um, like we talked about earlier, if you join at \$5 a month, you get all of the bonus content immediately. As soon as you sign up for that membership, you immediately get access to, like Syd said, over 300 hours of bonus content from every single year of the drive, from every single show on the network, which is great fun to have to listen to and to add to your podcast catalog.

Uh, for \$10 a month you get one of the 35 embroidered patches, as well as a letterpress Max Fun membership card and the bonus content, so that's important that you remember. At every level, you get all of the gifts associated with every level below it as well.

Um, so you'd get a super cool patch, along with all the bonus content. You get to pick one for your favorite show or your favorite patch, whatever you wanna—whatever you wanna use to make that decision. Uh, and then moving up from there, there are other levels, like the \$20 a month level where you get the Max Fun creativity pack or a rocket hat, as well as one of those patches, and the membership card, and the bonus content. Uh, the creativity pack will help you get in a creative head space and live life to the fullest.

There the 54 cards in the deck, and each card as an activity suggestion from someone on the network. Uh, and the hat, super cool rocket hat. And maybe you even put, you know, one of your patches on that hat, so you get a patch and a hat... and put 'em together. Um, above that there's \$35 a month. You get a messenger bag. There's levels even beyond that. Um, but, you know, all those ones I just mentioned, you get all that sweet, sweet bonus content, cool patch, cool hat or activity deck, all that cool stuff, for joining right now.

**Sydnee:** So whatever level you can join at or upgrade to, we truly appreciate it. As Teylor and Raleigh have already said, and as I have mentioned, there are real,

tangible ways that our lives are improved, and therefore the content we can create for you is improved with your support. And we thank you so much for doing that. [Maximumfun.org/join](https://Maximumfun.org/join). This is the time! This is the moment! Please. [laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** [singing] This is the time.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Raleigh:** [singing] This is the moment. [speaking] That sounded like a really inspirational song that you were writing.

**Sydnee:** It did. It did. I'm gonna keep working on that.

**Raleigh:** [singing] This is when you join the family, and you get a gift. MaxFunDrive! This is the time. This is the moment.

[all laugh]

**Raleigh:** I think that was really good.

**Sydnee:** I'm just gonna let you keep going with it.

**Taylor:** Yeah, I just wanna see where this goes! [laughs]

**Raleigh:** That's all I got. I think that was pretty good.

**Sydnee:** I feel like we need that eagle from *Last Unicorn* to soar over the top while you're singing this.

**Taylor:** This sounds like a Red Bull commercial, too.

**Sydnee:** [laughs loudly]

**Raleigh:** Yeah, exactly. Griffin had that song about MaxFunDrive from forever ago. This is the new moment. I'm stepping up. This is the Max Fun theme song now.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] Uh, so... [laughs] anyway.

**Raleigh:** I'll keep working on that. Get to it next year.

**Sydnee:** I do think it's really interesting, Tey, what you just brought up. Because maybe that was the thing that— when I was thinking back on this movie before I re-watched it this time, and I was thinking, like, "Oh, I remember *The Last Unicorn*," that it was a— here was— before I re-watched it, here was my thought on it: it was a cartoon, and it was about a unicorn, but there was also a scary bull.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** And I think it may have been about God and the Devil. [laughs]

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** I mean, like, really! In my, like, recollection of it, this is how it had sort of, like, solidified in my head as, like, I think it was some sort of religious allegory about the fight between good and evil, and the unicorn maybe was Jesus? I don't know. But, like— [laughs] and then I re-watched it and I was like, "Well, that probably wasn't exactly what it was!" [laughs] That was wrong. But that was how my kid brain processed, like, good, bad. Oh, must've been God and the Devil.

Um, but I do think what you said is closer to what they're trying to talk about.

**Taylor:** Well, yeah. I don't— you know, and I think I've seen interpretations of a religious context here, but— and I watched it looking for that, and I do not think that is... that's not what I get from it at all. I do think it's about... I don't know. I mean, it is about immortality, and about... [quietly] I don't know. I mean...

What is the choice that she makes in the end? She chooses to... like, protect the— the magic in the world, and go back to being an immortal, knowing that she'll regret missing out on the experience of, like, temporal love. Like, I don't know. [laughs] That's not religious to me. That's something else.

**Raleigh:** That's a deep decision. That's a deep moment.

**Sydnee:** It was. Was it— was it written by a vampire? [laughs]

**Taylor:** I don't think it's about va— I don't think it's about vampires. I don't think that's a—

**Sydnee:** It sounds a little like vampires.

**Raleigh:** *Twilight*?

**Taylor:** No!

**Sydnee:** It sounds a little like *Twilight*. [laughs]

**Taylor:** C'mon, no.

**Raleigh:** Was this the inspiration for *Twilight*?

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** No!

**Sydnee:** I'm joking. No, but that is a really complex idea. Uh, and I don't know. I guess you could— I guess if you wanted to, you could tie that to, like, some sort of Christian allegory. Where, like... I mean, seriously. Like, and I know everybody's gonna laugh but, like, you can see a Jesus-like figure in an immortal who becomes mortal briefly and then makes a sacrifice to return to immortality, but has alwa— but will always feel more connected to mortality because of that. I don't know. Like, you can see— I could see where maybe my brain pro— and especially as a kid, like, we used to go to church, so I would've processed it that way. I don't know.

**Raleigh:** Yeah. I didn't process things that way as a kid. I didn't even know *Veggie Tales* was a religious thing, so.

**Taylor:** Well, okay. That's a little bit more on the nose. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** They were stories from the Bible!

**Raleigh:** I didn't know them. I thought they were *Veggie Tales* stories!

[pause]

**Sydnee:** But they were from the Bible!

**Raleigh:** We had very different childhood experiences with the same parents!

**Sydnee:** [laughs] I just— but they, like— some of them are just good lessons. Like, they're not necessarily... they're just, like, morality tales. But some of them are... like...

**Rileigh:** *Veggie Tales* was my Bible.

**Sydnee:** Like Rack, Shack, and Benny?

**Rileigh:** My Bible.

**Sydnee:** And Nebuchadnezzar?

**Rileigh:** *Veggie Tales*. Nope.

**Taylor:** You know what? I think—

**Sydnee:** Esther?

**Taylor:** I think if we, like, threw out all the— all the stuff that people do with the Bible and just replaced it with the lessons you learn from *Veggie Tales*, I'd be okay with that religion. Like, if you want to believe in what *Veggie Tales* is putting forth, I think that's fine. [laughs quietly]

**Rileigh:** I believe in Bob and Larry.

**Taylor:** I am not... I am very much not a— not a religious person, but I'm not offended by *Veggie Tales*-based religions.

[all laugh quietly]

**Sydnee:** You were a huge fan of Madam Blueberry, which to be fair, the title Madam Blueberry is like Madam Bovary, but it has nothing to do with Madam Bovary! But anyway...

**Rileigh:** I just liked her style. Anyways, um...

**Sydnee:** [laughs quietly]

**Rileigh:** But I could see how you could get that from this movie. I don't think that's necessarily what I got watching it. In my head, when I read the title *The Last Unicorn*, and I wasn't really thinking that it was from 1982, but I was like, "[sighs] Climate change."

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** We've lost all the unicorns. This is the last one. And then I was like, "No, this is from 1982. This doesn't— that wouldn't have... "

**Sydnee:** Uh...

**Rileigh:** "That wouldn't... " I mean, *Fern Gully*, I guess, also kind of had that message.

**Taylor:** Well, but—

**Sydnee:** There was— go ahead.

**Taylor:** I was gonna say, there was such a strong, like— I mean, I feel like the conservationist narrative at the time— and especially, I mean, this was made in the 80's, but in the 90's, we... [laughs quietly] that was an element that was part of media.

**Rileigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** That really— no, it would've fit it, because even though we weren't talking about climate change back then the way we do now, the idea of humans destroying the planet, and we need to make changes to avoid this sort of catastrophic direction we're headed in, that's rooted before then. So, like, there were things like that. Like, I was aware— that was— I mean, if you had asked me when I was, like, Charlie's age, "What do you want to do when you grow up?" Save the rainforest would've been on my list.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** I mean, seriously. Like, those sort of messages were really pushed from probably the 60's on, when it was recognized, like with pesticides and pollution and, I mean, all of that. Cutting the rings on your soda cans.

**Rileigh:** I still do that.

**Sydnee:** That campaign was so effective.

**Taylor:** We still do it.

**Rileigh:** Obviously.

**Sydnee:** [laughs quietly] But there definitely was that message that, like, we are doing devastating harm to the planet that cannot be undone, would've been known when this movie was made. Um, I don't know that's what they were saying, but...

**Taylor:** I mean, I think that, you know, the— 'cause... you know, one of the characters we didn't really talk about is the King, who is the reason— he's driven all these unicorns into the sea. He is very much like, if we wanna talk about, like, the— the evil archetype of man's folly, like, he has captured all of these immortal beings so he can watch them trying to free themselves from the water every day and being driven back, and that this is the only thing that brings him joy. And, you know, like, man's attempt to conquer immortality this way. Which you have throughout the movie, right? 'Cause Mommy Fortuna is the other sort of villainous character. And she's captured this harpy, and her whole thing is like, "Yeah, this harpy might murder me, but I'll live on forever as the thing that captured it."

That's— it's these kind of desperate humans grasping at immortality through some way, instead of just accepting. Like, I do think that there's a bit of that conservationist method of the Earth ideally is meant to be immortal. It's meant to live beyond us. We have our time here, and then we leave it, but we are meant to preserve the immortal things that need to continue on. Um, and not try to grasp at them and conquer them. Because you can't— you can't conquer death. We're mortal— we're mortal things.

**Sydnee:** And I mean, I think visually, like, the attempts to do so in the movie are ugly and destructive, you know? Like, just visually, you don't want to be part of those forces. Um, Mama Fortuna is depicted as this kind of... you know, twisted, angry figure. And I mean, I think you see that, like, visually. These are d— and

they're destructive to yourself. Like, these— not just to the Earth and the people around you, an attempt to harness immortality destroys you too.

**Taylor:** Yeah. I mean, now that we're talking about it, I really do think, like, mortality is the central issue. 'Cause even, like, Molly Grue, who I— man. Her speech... I'm gonna get choked up just thinking about it! When she sees the unicorn. And she says, "Why would you come to me now?"

'Cause she's older and, you know, like, "Not when I was a young maiden. Not when I— you know, I waited my entire life to see you and now you're here, and I'm old."

Like, that... you know, that is— that is a heavy message of, like, you know, this sort of... older woman who feels like she's lost her beauty, and that now she has her purpose to, like, take care of the uni— and when she just is like, "Okay, I'm ready to go." Like, accepts that this is her path, "I'm going to help this unicorn," I don't know. That's... like...

**Sydnee:** What do you think she is— "Why would you come to me now?" Do you think we're talking about is an understanding? A knowledge? Is that— I mean, I know literally it's the unicorn. But, like...

**Raleigh:** I was gonna say, it's a unicorn.

**Sydnee:** Metaphorically.

[pause]

**Taylor:** Well, I mean, you know, it's like the unicorns are meant to come to beautiful young maidens. That that is— that's what she was taught, that that's when she's of worth. But, like, now is when the unicorn needs her. Now is when she's needed. Now is when she's on her path. And... you know, I don't know. She accepts it. Like, this is— this is my role to play in protecting this thing. I mean, which is sort of the same with Schmendrick, too, right? Like, he's just sort of a middling, not happy, unsuccessful wizard. And then as soon as he sees the unicorn he's like, "Oh, I have to free you, and I have to help you." you know? Like, she gives purpose to these people that were otherwise sort of lost. And they accept their roles and just sort of like— even the prince, really. He says, you know— like, he's part of, like, being like, 'No, she needs— I love her, no matter

what she is. And I will serve her, and I will help her become a unicorn again."  
[laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** So the unicorn's kind of a destiny, fate, could be a religious, whatever sort of grander purpose. It's like a purpose.

**Taylor:** Yeah. I mean, everybody that serves as, like, a caretaker of her, is— is on the right path. Once again, you can take it as religious, but I think it also does have a conservationist sort of method— er, message there. Like, we're temporary things, and when you live as a caretaker of the Earth that you're allowed to be on, that is the right— that's the right thing to do.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** Not— not be resentful of the things that outlive you.

**Sydnee:** It is really interesting to think about those sort of themes. I can't imagine— some of the different programs and stuff we've talked about. Like, specifically I kept thinking about what you were saying with *The Good Place*. Like, it's hard to imagine that these themes didn't inspire people in some way. That, like, those ideas weren't deep in their brains when they started making the things. Not directly. Like, I don't mean, like, this is a... you know what I mean? I'm not saying, like, plagiarizing. I mean, like, that idea, that concept, that theme. Um, 'cause I really do— which I know you haven't seen the whole show, Tey, but like, what you're talking about is very much in play in the show *The Good Place*, which was what I found the most moving and heartbreaking and beautiful part of it, was this idea that, like, as an immortal, it's hard to understand what it's like to be mortal, because as they put it, we all walk around a little sad all the time because we know this will end.

**Raleigh:** Mm-hmm. Wow.

**Sydnee:** Well, I didn't mean for it to get that...

**Raleigh:** Oh, you're tearing up.

**Sydnee:** I am.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** [laughs quietly] No, I— that's what we were talking about at the very beginning of this episode.

**Sydnee:** I'm not at my best— [laughs quietly]

**Rileigh:** You said, "Who is this movie for?" Obviously going through all this, talking about all this, not necessarily for kids. The real meaning obviously is for us. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Well, but, like, my kids were watching it while I was, and they were enjoying it because... I mean, honestly, the parts they liked the best were just looking at, like, "Look at that beautiful princess." And then, like, the music scenes where it's just like, "Here's a unicorn walking through this gorgeous forest with— and there's, like, a butterfly sometimes, and there's flowers and, like, it's— there's a song playing. And they were just both like, "What are— what is Mommy watching?" [laughs]

**Taylor:** [laughs] Yeah, I was glad that I picked something that your kids could watch without... I don't know. A few of the things that I've picked it's like, "Oh, ah, no, no, no. Not for kids. Don't let your kids watch *Perfect Blue*." [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** [laughs] Yeah. Figured that out.

**Taylor:** But this one— yeah. I mean, the deeper stuff, I don't know. I mean, I looked it up. It was marketed as a children's movie, but I don't think that the core message— it's not inappropriate for kids. I just think it can be enjoyed from, I mean, not just adults. I think specifically anyone that is old enough to grapple with thoughts of mortality, this movie is trying to sort of comfort you. Like, you know, there's something special about being mortal. And that is the temptation, if you will, of the last unicorn, is that, you know, the temporary joy she'll get from mortality.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. That— no, and I think that it's interesting to think that when we watched it— I mean, at least I had this experience, and I think you would say the same. It was nipping at my brain that something else was there, and I couldn't process it then. Um, which I think is a really cool thing for a movie to do for a kid. Like, there's something here that I can't touch yet. But when I'm older I'll be able to touch it.

And it makes sense that it made me sad in a way I didn't understand.

**Taylor:** Well, that—

**Sydnee:** 'Cause I wasn't contemplating mortality that directly. [laughs]

**Raleigh:** Right.

**Taylor:** Well, and I think specifically that regret is touched on at the end. I mean, I don't know. The concept of regret is not a thing that kid's movies talk about. Like, regret is part of life, and that that's what sets this unicorn apart. But is that what mortality is? Does it come up to regret? Because is that where... I mean, is that where so many emotions come from? That we know we only get so much time, and we only get so many chances, and that some chances will pass us by, some roads won't be taken. We can't do it all, because we only have so much time.

**Raleigh:** Wow.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** On a... [sighs] on a—

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

**Sydnee:** I'm trying to think of something on a positive note.

**Taylor:** I don't think that's negative! I just think it's— it's big. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** No, it is big, it is big. It is a beautiful movie, Taylor. Thank you for bringing it.

**Taylor:** I guess sorry. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** No. I mean, it's— it's a beautiful movie. And again, my children enjoyed it without any sadness. Like, they did not feel this. They liked the movie. Um, so I don't think it's, like, bad for kids to watch. It's just... I mean, it does all these things, and that's the mark, I think, of a good movie, or a good piece of media. Something that can do multiple things at once, make you feel different things, and generate this much conversation. It's a good thing. So, thank you.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** [through laughter] Sorry for making you watch a bummer unicorn movie.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] No, you don't need to apologize. I would recommend, uh... where did I find it?

**Taylor:** I watched it on Amazon Prime free, but there were ads.

**Sydnee:** Yes, that is— now that you say that— 'cause I just searched it, but that is where I found it, too. 'Cause I also had to watch the ads.

**Taylor:** Yeah. That's good, it gives you breaks to, like, stare into the void, I guess. [laughs]

**Raleigh:** Exactly.

**Sydnee:** To process.

**Taylor:** It's not really sad! I don't know. I feel like it's, you know... it's just...

**Sydnee:** It's not. It's not as sad as this conversation made it sound. [laughs]

**Taylor:** Sorry.

**Sydnee:** No.

**Taylor:** Try to— don't— watch *The Last Unicorn*. Don't question its meaning. I guess that's what happens when you do. [laughs quietly]

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

**Raleigh:** Okay. Um, so I wanted to talk about a movie called *One Day* that came out in 2011. It's an Anne Hathaway movie. Um, I think it's another one of those that I'm not sure it was necessarily popular, uh, among everyone at the time. But for some reason my friends and I discovered it when we were early in high school and watched it an unreasonable amount of times, so.

**Sydnee:** Well, that sounds perfect.

**Raleigh:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** Alright. We will watch that next time. Um, one last time before we go, I just want to remind you that it is the Maximum Fun Drive. It's not too late to join. [Maximumfun.org/join](https://Maximumfun.org/join). If you can, kick in a monthly support to our network we would so enjoy— we would so appreciate it. Um, if you are already doing so and you're in a position where you can upgrade your membership, this is the moment. We have levels at \$5, at \$10, at \$20, \$35, and higher. Whatever you can do we appreciate it. You can boost, too, if you just want to— you're not in a position where you can go up to the next level, but you want to throw in a few extra dollars, there's that option as well. Um, and anything you can give, it really helps us out, as we've already said. At the \$5 a month level, you get all that bonus content, from all the shows, from all the years, tons of fun extra stuff that not everybody gets access to. \$5 a month gets you that. \$10 a month you get to pick your patch. They're all so adorable. \$20 a month. We've talked about it. There are so many levels. Whatever you can do, now is the time. Please join [Maximumfun.org/join](https://Maximumfun.org/join). It's not too late... yet. And thank you all. Thank you, listeners. You can tweet at us @stillbuff. You can email us at [stillbuffering@maximumfun.org](mailto:stillbuffering@maximumfun.org). And thank you to The Nouvellas for our theme song, "Baby You Change Your Mind."

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

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

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

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

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

[theme music plays]

**Raleigh:** [singing] This is the time, this is the moment.

**Sydnee:** I was hoping.

**Raleigh:** [singing] And you will join the family. [speaking] I just wrote it. I don't remember it. [singing] This is the time.

**Sydnee:** [singing] This is the moment.

**Rileigh:** [singing] Maximum Fun Drive.

**Sydnee:** [singing] Come be a member.

**Rileigh:** There you go.

[pause]

**Sydnee:** [singing] Today!

**Rileigh:** Woo!

**Sydnee:** Tey?

**Taylor:** [quietly] Uh... [singing] Life is a temporary experience.

**Sydnee:** Oh no!

**Rileigh:** [simultaneously] Oh, no, no, no.

[all laugh]

[music plays]

**Speaker One:** Thank you so much to everyone who participated in this year's MaxFunDrive! If you're a member who wants to purchase additional patches, our annual shop is now live! The proceeds for this year's sale will be going to Trans Lifeline.

Any time is a good time to donate to Trans Lifeline, but this year it feels particularly important. Trans Lifeline is a nonprofit for the trans community, by the trans community. We're grateful that with your support, we'll be able to help Trans Lifeline connect trans folks to the support and resources they need to survive and thrive.

The sale will run until Friday, May 20th. Folks at the \$10 monthly level and above will have access to all of the patches from the drive. We also have a special

network patch, starring Nutsy, that all members can purchase. For more information on Trans Lifeline, visit [translifeline.org](http://translifeline.org). And for more info on the patches, head to [Maximumfun.org/patchsale](http://Maximumfun.org/patchsale).

[chord]

[music and ad end]

[chord]

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