

Wonderful! 240: Bone Power

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[theme song, "Money Won't Pay" plays]

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hello, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is *Wonderful!*

Griffin: I'm comfortably seated in a chair like a big adult boy.

Rachel: Yeah, hey!

Griffin: We're movin' on up.

Rachel: [sings] Mooovin' on up.

Griffin: Did we both get there at the same time? 'Cause it seems like it.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: That's so good. I love us.

Rachel: I chose to sing it, so it took me a little longer to get it out.

Griffin: And you did it in, I would say, a baritone register.

Rachel: [laughs] Uh-huh.

Griffin: That really worked on you, I thought.

Rachel: I like to do a low voice, 'cause I cannot do a high voice.

Griffin: Yeah. Um, yes. Yesterday... not yesterday. Last episode, I was seated on the floor, and it did bring, I would say, a curious energy to the proceedings.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I felt like I was in college.

Rachel: Yeah, right? Like we're hanging out, there's a lava lamp.

Griffin: There's Doobie Dan, and...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: ... Stoner Steve, and we're just passin' the hookah around. And y'know, just scattin' about whatever it was I talked about last week. Gun to my head, couldn't tell ya.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: But now I'm in a chair.

Rachel: Yeah, you're like a business guy.

Griffin: Look at me in my business shorts.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I'm wearing my business shorts and my business Hinterlands Bar t-shirt.

Rachel: [laughing] Uh-huh.

Griffin: That I would wear to any bank, or... business facility...

Rachel: Can I say something about you?

Griffin: O...kay?

Rachel: [laughs] Griffin won't leave the house in like, uh, a pajama short.

Griffin: I don't think that that's so weird.

Rachel: See, I feel like... I don't know. I personally don't care.

Griffin: Um, for me, I guess it comes down to...

Rachel: Like, if you were an athletic man, it would not be unusual for you to leave the house in what could be a pajama short.

Griffin: Yeah, but there's a difference. If I see somebody in athletic wear, and they're, y'know, doin' a jog...

Rachel: Oh, okay, I see what you're saying.

Griffin: That's one thing. But if they are at a children's museum with their five-year-old, that feels less great to me.

Rachel: So you feel like it's possible that somebody would lean over to their friend and be like, "See that man? He's not jogging." [laughs]

Griffin: There's also something about – and I can't define this exactly, so please don't ask me to – but it feels a little bit more acceptable to be out in public with a more rigid fabric covering your genitalia.

Rachel: Okay. [laughs] Okay. I mean, I can't argue with that.

Griffin: Do you want me to— okay, cool. I thought you could get on— you seem like the kind of person who could get on board with that.

Rachel: I mean, y'know, your body, your choice. I'm not gonna get in there.

Griffin: Yeah. You're not? Just kidding.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: This is a family show! Um, this is a show where we talk about things we like, things that are good, things that we're into. And uh, I mean, things are really comin' together in this office. It's almost identical to how it was the last time we recorded, but I have chair now.

Rachel: The difference is, you have a chair. Did you have this printer last week?

Griffin: No. I had a bum printer that I did buy from the Target, that ended up being, somebody had cut a box open and returned a different printer inside of it.

Rachel: Somebody's return. [laughs]

Griffin: That then stained my fucking carpet with ink for the second time in one week. Our beautiful, brand new carpets.

Rachel: Yeah...

Griffin: But that's not wonderful.

Rachel: So, this is not a Brother printer. And I felt a little disloyal, I think, when I saw—

Griffin: They had a Brother printer. I'm hugely loyal to the Brother brand at this point.

Rachel: But they didn't have one?

Griffin: Didn't have it.

Rachel: Mm.

Griffin: The selection was limited. We live near a Target, but it's not...

Rachel: It's a miniature Target.

Griffin: It's not one of the good Targets.

Rachel: It does have groceries, which I definitely appreciate.

Griffin: We do like that.

Rachel: But like, they don't have shoes, for example. [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, that's a good way of sort of summarizing it.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, hey, do you have a small wonder that you can talk to me about, please?

Rachel: Ooh... I mean, I'm just gonna say... and I know that I've talked about playgrounds on this show, but DC has...

Griffin: My lord.

Rachel: ... an abundant amount of playgrounds!

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And they're all really good!

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like, our experience in the past is that there are good playgrounds, and then there are not so good playgrounds. Uh, y'know, either the

equipment is really old, or they like, don't have a swing. Uh, but these playgrounds all look like...

Griffin: Top of the line.

Rachel: ... like they were built in the past, like, five years. They all look shiny, and they have all the new bells and whistles, and that like, springy turf that I like so much.

Griffin: I love that springy turf. A kid could take a header from 20 feet!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And bounce right off!

Rachel: Yeah. So I'm loving that.

Griffin: No harm done.

Rachel: That is great for us, 'cause a lot of times, y'know, like, it's hard to hype up a museum to our son.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: But a playground, he almost always will get into.

Griffin: Yeah, sure. I had something, but I lost it.

Rachel: I'm sorry.

Griffin: Oh, I'm gonna say, when you do— Kickstart something on Kickstarter, or any other sort of crowdfunding website, and then you immediately forget about it until like, two and a half years later when it finally gets delivered to your door. And it's like a little— it's almost like a time capsule. It's like, "Oh, what?"

I guess I did... I guess I did support that project a very long time ago. I guess I did support this little hacker handheld that I don't know why... I'm not a hacker. I don't know why I did it. I guess it was not that expensive, but then it just shows up at my door, and I'm like, what the fuck is this thing?

Rachel: I was gonna say, you told me what it was and I immediately forgot.

Griffin: Well, the thing that came yesterday is a gaming handheld thing that I purchased... so long ago.

Rachel: Oh, okay. Okay.

Griffin: Um, but yeah, it's always exciting. I guess it's just exciting to get things in the mail that you forgot you ordered. I like to preorder, like, stuff.

Rachel: I feel that way about a subscription service.

Griffin: Interesting.

Rachel: Like, time will pass, and I have no idea how long it has been.

Griffin: No.

Rachel: And then a box will arrive, and I'm like, "Oh yeah! Here it is!"

Griffin: How delightful. Yeah.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: I go first this week. I'm gonna talk about my friend and yours... [in a small voice] Pepperoni?

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [exaggerated] Pepperoni?

Rachel: This... I would be curious if you did any research to figure out why it has such close ties to West Virginia.

Griffin: [exaggerated] Pepperoni? [normally] Yeah, it does have them, and I will tell them. Of course I looked that up.

Rachel: Okay, good.

Griffin: You think I'm gonna miss a chance to talk about my beautiful home state? No way, man. Uh, here's something I didn't know – salami is the big Venn diagram circle. Imagine a big salami.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And then pepperoni— a small pepperoni fits inside of it.

Rachel: Oh, really? So a pepperoni is a kind of salami?

Griffin: Yeah. So, salami is sort of, if I'm not mistaken, like what most sort of Italian-cased composite sausages fall under.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: So everything that you get, like, underneath that is a salami. So a pepperoni is a small salami.

Rachel: I never realized how sonically pleasing pepperoni was until we started saying it over and over again. [laughs]

Griffin: Pepperoni! Yeah, it's a great word to say out loud. I could do a whole segment on salami, because we have had it in the house for a while now.

Rachel: Oh, I love it.

Griffin: And is there anything more— the way you said that was so, like...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It was almost like, um... like, erotically charged? Like, [moaning] "Oh, I love it..."

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: It's— nothing is more exciting than like, "Oh, I gotta make a sandwich. What am I gonna put on it, ham? [snores] Turkey? No."

Rachel: For years and years, I just would default to turkey. And I kind of forgot, like, y'know what? I can buy other meats.

Griffin: Yep. I got those little sandwich rounds. Those little sandwich things at— and the salami is the exact size of it! And so, it's just perfect in every way!

Rachel: Oh, that's fun!

Griffin: Anyway. Pepperoni's the star of this show. Um, because it has filled an important part of my life. It is, I think, maybe the best pizza topping. The most sort of like, archetypical. Most like, iconic pizza topping.

Rachel: Oh yeah. Like if you see it in a commercial, you're like, "I would eat that."

Griffin: When you're eatin' a little gooey, cheesy pie, and you get that just like, little spicy visitor... this little spicy friend that comes along for the adventure, that's great. Americans consume around 250 million pounds of pepperoni each year. I'd imagine pizza topping pepperoni makes up a majority of that, because we do order it on 36% of pizzas produced nationally.

Rachel: [laughs] Okay.

Griffin: I should've asked you what you thought the percentage was. 'Cause I would've... 36% sounds—

Rachel: Does that seem low?

Griffin: It seems perfect to me.

Rachel: Okay. [laughs]

Griffin: I bet I could've guessed it to the number if I really thought about it. 'Cause I think I've had it on 36% of the pizzas I've had in my life. Anyway, it makes a fine sandwich meat too. I think I had it on every sandwich I ate in middle school.

Rachel: See, this blows my mind! My whole life, pepperoni was exclusively a pizza topping.

Griffin: No. You're thinking inside the box.

Rachel: I have made many a pizza in our household as a couple. And there's always pepperoni leftover, 'cause they put way too much for one pizza in a bag. And then I would just look at Griffin as he put pepperoni on his sandwiches like, what is happening?

Griffin: It's lunch meat. It's a spicy deli meat. I don't know what you want me to say. I'm not gonna apologize for my behavior.

Rachel: I guess it's just the uncooked thing. The uncooked thing is confusing to me, 'cause I've only like...

Griffin: It's cured!

Rachel: I've only eaten it cooked.

Griffin: It's cured! It's fine, there's no botulism! It's got nitrates and nitrites!

Rachel: Listeners, write in and let me know if, in your region, you also eat pepperoni on sandwiches.

Griffin: Okay, listen, we gotta get to— well, first of all, we're gonna talk about the pepperoni roll. But first, I do want to say that, in Nova Scotia, they eat fried pepperoni as like a bar snack, with like a honey mustard dipping sauce. I'd—

Rachel: Oh. I mean, sure!

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs] Absolutely. Okay, pepperoni roll is a— like an iconic West Virginia thing. It is probably the, like, food that West Virginia is most known for. Um, and even then, I don't know that it's like, so widely— I don't know that that is common knowledge.

Rachel: Yeah, no, I didn't know it. Like, it wasn't like I associated that with West Virginia at all.

Griffin: Yeah. So it was— the pepperoni roll was invented in West Virginia in the '20s, basically as like, miner food. Food for miners. Like digging miners, not like, young people. Uh, because it didn't need to be refrigerated, and it had so much protein that you could turn into raw digging power.

Rachel: Will you explain what it is?

Griffin: A pepperoni roll is a...

Rachel: I always assumed it was like, a Hot Pocket. Like, I figured it was like a pizza in a roll.

Griffin: It's just pepperoni.

Rachel: But it's just pepperoni?

Rachel: It's just pepperoni inside of a roll. There's no pizza sauce or cheese or anything like that. It's not Hot Pocket... it is Hot Pocket in form, not in flavor.

Rachel: Okay. [laughs]

Griffin: It is like a softer, chewier, baked bread that is just chockablock... not chockablock. There is a, I would say, in most pepperoni rolls, a conservative amount of pepperoni. 'Cause it's like, you don't need a lot. It asserts itself with only a few beautiful little medallions.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: But what's good is, you warm it up, and when you warm it up, the pepperoni like, sweats off, and it like, fills the bread with like, kind of spicy oil. It's... I would kill for one right now. And I'm betting, in DC, we probably could source some.

Rachel: We're close, yeah.

Griffin: Some ethically-sourced pepperoni rolls. I want to tell this quick, fun sidebar, 'cause this is a story I did not know about.

Uh, so, pepperoni rolls, invented in West Virginia in the '20s, became like a very, very popular thing sold in bakeries. Uh, so, the... there was a point where, uh, the like, Department of Agriculture and like, food safety organizations, uh, were torn about the pepperoni roll, because it is cured meat inside of like, an encased thing. And so, it had different rules about it than like, just a normal sandwich sold at a bakery or whatever would. And so, they had to try and impose, like, restrictions on bakeries that sold pepperoni rolls for food safety reasons.

And so, uh, the United States Department of Agriculture proposed reclassi—I'm reading this from Wikipedia. Uh, proposed reclassifying bakeries that manufactured the rolls as meat processing plants, thus subjecting them to daily inspections for hygiene.

Rachel: Whoa!

Griffin: The bakery owners said that meeting the new regulations would increase costs so much that producing pepperoni rolls would no longer be profitable to them. The United States Department of Agriculture suggested that the bakeries cut them in half, and rename them pepperoni sandwiches, because cut sandwiches are not subject to the additional hygiene regulations. But the bakeries – and let me editorialize here – wisely refused, saying customers would not buy pepperoni rolls cut in half.

That's already pretty wild, right? Jay Rockefeller, US senator for West Virginia, intervened and met with Secretary of Agriculture, Richard Ling. After the meeting, Secretary Ling issued a special exemption to bakeries producing pepperoni rolls.

Rachel: Wow. I wonder how that meeting went.

Griffin: Your tax dollars at work!

Rachel: That would be a great Drunk History. If that show still exists, that would be great.

Griffin: That *would* be great.

Rachel: Just to talk about that meeting where they were like, "Hey. Hey. Hey."

Griffin: "Hey." Slams one down on the table. "Eat this."

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: "Now cut it in half. It's not the same, is it?"

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: Um, so, I also didn't realize that pepperoni actually originated in the United States in like the 1910s. It was a creation of like, Italian-American deli meat scientists who wanted to recreate, like, southern Italian, like, spicy salamis, like your sopressatas, if you will.

Rachel: Yeah! 'Cause if you think about Italy, I think like, prosciutto. I don't think pepperoni.

Griffin: Yeah. Well, there's... what is the other one? Capricolla?

Rachel: Cap...

Griffin: I can never remember. But there's like— there are things that taste like pepperoni from Italy, but pepperoni was an invention of Italian-Americans, because they didn't have access to the same ingredients. So it was like—

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: So they used paprika, and like, chili powder, and other things that are not sort of in traditional spicy salamis. Uh, it's also cured with nitrites that give it that red color. That is like, why it is red, is because of how it is cured.

Rachel: Oh, okay.

Griffin: And also, the name 'pepperoni' is borrowed from the Italian word, pepperoncino, which means spicy peppers.

Rachel: Yeah, okay!

Griffin: That's fun! It makes sense!

Rachel: That is fun. [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, I love pepperoni. I think it's a great—

Rachel: We have some downstairs right now. You know that, right?

Griffin: Yeah, I'll probably continue my streak of eating Italian meat sandwiches for lunch. 'Cause I guess that's— I'm really discovering who DC Griffin is.

Rachel: Uh-huh. [laughs]

Griffin: He's more, I would say, active, and um... he loves Italian meat sandwiches in a way that, uh, I guess Texas Griffin just didn't. Didn't really understand.

Rachel: Yeah. Well, I mean, in Texas, right, it's all about barbecue.

Griffin: Fair, yes.

Rachel: And so, it wasn't the most welcoming environment...

Griffin: For an Italian meat sort of expert.

Rachel: Maybe even hostile to— yes. Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Yeah. Although, God, their grocery stores were better.

Rachel: I know. Oh, that was gonna be my small wonder!

Griffin: Oh yeah.

Rachel: I mean, I've probably talked about it before.

Griffin: Maybe we just— okay, we've only done Wegman's. And no— I'm sure there's people who've grown up—

Rachel: We've done Giant Food.

Griffin: We've had some Giant Food? Okay. Well, let's just say the Wegman's chips and salsa, perhaps unsurprisingly, leaves a great deal to be desired compared to the HEB selections that are available. But from what I understand, you can import the HEB goods. Which we may have to start doing.

Rachel: What I was gonna say is, my small wonder is like, the sheer number of people we have met that have connections to Texas here.

Griffin: Yeah. True!

Rachel: And I feel confident saying that, in each conversation, we could very comfortably talk about HEB.

Griffin: A lot of our neighbors are Texas expats. I bet they know where we can get some HEB. I bet they know that there's a—

Rachel: You talk about this like this is a thing that you can like, reach out to grocery stores in other states and like...

Griffin: Just be like, Giant Eagle, can you—

Rachel: ... slyly get... [laughing]

Griffin: We'll go to Wegman's and be like, "Hey, listen. Your chips... your tortilla chips aren't very good, my friend." And they'll be like, "We know, we know. Here, we'll take you in the back room."

Rachel: [laughing] Where we sell HEB?

Griffin: Where the ghost of HE Butts. Hey, can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Okay.

[ad break stinger plays]

[ad break]

Rachel: Do you wanna hear my thing this week?

Griffin: Oh yeah.

Rachel: So, I was actually encouraged by a listener. I tweeted, we were running late this week.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And whenever we do that, I like to tweet a little, like, "Hey guys, we know we're late. I'm sorry."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: "We have stuff." And somebody was like, "I'm dying for Poetry Corner!" So hey, guess what?

Griffin: Oh wow!

Rachel: Guess where we're going?

Griffin: [sings the Poetry Corner theme, increasing in pitch dramatically]

Rachel: [laughing] Oh gosh, oh no! That makes Poetry Corner sound like it's off a cliff.

Griffin: Yeah. Well, I was thinking of it more like it was ascending into heaven.

Rachel: Oh, that's nice!

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: See, that's— glass is half full.

Griffin: I would love to hear like a nice tenor, soprano version of Tossed Salad and Scrambled Eggs.

Rachel: Next live show... oh.

Griffin: What?

Rachel: I thought you were gonna talk about your Poetry Corner theme, and not the Frasier theme.

Griffin: It's the same— psst! It's the same song.

Rachel: Next live show, in my wildest dream, next live show...

Griffin: I'll pull out a standing bass and...

Rachel: No! We have like a little quartet.

Griffin: Holy shit.

Rachel: Like a whole uh, barber shop come out and do our Poetry Corner theme for us.

Griffin: And not like a jazz trio or something that could—

Rachel: No!

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: I want a bunch of people standing around a microphone going, "Bum bum bum bum..." In different like, harmonies.

Griffin: And then, do we have them bust out like, The Drew Carey Show theme song, and Growing Pains, and like, some other classics?

Rachel: I mean, it would make sense, right? If we're going to pay for a group to come, to not have them perform for three seconds and then send them off the stage. [laughs]

Griffin: I should be clear – when I said The Drew Carey Show theme song, I did mean Moon Over Parma, and not Cleveland Rocks by The Presidents of the United States of America. I know there were gonna be a lot of people in the audience who were confused when I said that.

Rachel: How did you know the name?

Griffin: Well, first of all, I love Presidents of the United States of America. The band. Not the... dudes.

Rachel: And that was their song?

Griffin: Cleveland Rocks was their song. Moon Over Parma, I think, was uh—

Rachel: Oh, yeah, that's what I'm talking about. How did you know that Moon Over Parma...

Griffin: 'Cause it starts with, [sings] "Moon over Parma, bring my love to me tonight!" I used to watch The Drew Carey Show quite a bit.

Rachel: Oh.

Griffin: And— which I'm just now realizing.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Similar to how I had a sort of Dharma and Greg awakening during that special episode.

Rachel: Like, wait, I used to watch this show.

Griffin: We have delayed this Poetry Corner for—

Rachel: Okay, I'm sorry. The poet I would like to speak about this week is Jane Hirshfield.

Griffin: I know that name.

Rachel: Oh yeah? I mean, she's still kickin' around, makin' the poems.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: She is kind of... I mean, she's not a member of what is often called the zen poets. But she did study zen Buddhism at the San Francisco Zen Center for several years.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: So she is kind of associated with them. I don't know if that's why you know her. [laughs]

Griffin: It means nothing to me. If she had been known as one of The Zen Poets, do you think I would've been like, "Oh yeah!"

Rachel: I don't know. I don't know, sometimes in an English literature class, you study the different movements in poetry.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Did you ever do that?

Griffin: I never took an English literature class, sooo...

Rachel: Shut up!

Griffin: I don't think I did.

Rachel: I'm just finding this out?

Griffin: I mean, I took— okay, I took uh...

Rachel: What did you take? I mean, I know you were journalism, but like, you didn't take like a... let's read books and talk about them class?

Griffin: So I had a West Virginia literature class, where we talked about like, poetry and books written by like, West Virginian authors and—

Rachel: In college?

Griffin: In college, yeah. I don't think...

Rachel: Oh man!

Griffin: I don't think I ever had to read...

Rachel: Period. [laughing]

Griffin: ... a book... in college. I had to do like, a ton of science and history and math and foreign language, and like, all that stuff was part of what they called The Marshall Plan. But I don't think—

Rachel: This is alarming to me. [laughing]

Griffin: I mean, I read books!

Rachel: I just thought as like, part of the core... y'know? Like, these classes everybody takes when they go to a state school?

Griffin: Okay, please understand, though, you went to school for reading for like, seven years.

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

Griffin: So maybe your baseline is a little bit intense.

Rachel: That's true. I guess it's not like you were an accounting major, where you had to take all of these like, math courses. I just assumed—

Griffin: You would think I was, based—

Rachel: You had a lot of room in there for...

Griffin: I had to take an econ class.

Rachel: Well yeah, I did too when I thought I was gonna be a journalism major.

Griffin: Oh yeah.

Rachel: Anyway. We are all over the place!

Griffin: We gotta dial— we are doing Jane dirty right now.

Rachel: [laughs] So, the exciting thing about Jane Hirshfield is that she's still out there, producing books all of the time. A lot of these poets who kind of made a name for themselves, like, decades ago have kind of like, settled into teaching, and have not continued really. She had a book called Ledger come out in 2020. Like, she is up in the biz every day.

Griffin: Every day.

Rachel: Every day. [laughs]

Griffin: Every day, she releases a new book of poetry.

Rachel: [laughs] Um, I thought this was a nice... so, I'm at Poets.org, and they, a lot of times, will have different poets talk about the poet that they are featuring. So this is Rosanna Warren who said, "Hirshfield has elaborated a sensuously philosophical art that imposes a pause in our fast-forward habits of mind. Her poems appear simple, and are not. Her language, in its cleanliness and transparency, poses riddles of a quietly metaphysical nature."

Griffin: Ooh boy! I cannot wait to hear this poem!

Rachel: I thought that was like a really succinct, like, nice introduction to her.

Griffin: Yeah, I'm intrigued!

Rachel: Um, her work has been selected for seven editions of Best American Poetry.

Griffin: My lord.

Rachel: So I don't know if you've... I guess you're not probably not familiar. But every year, Best American Poetry comes out and—

Griffin: I know it's an annual thing, so seven editions of it represents a great deal of poetry.

Rachel: She has taught at Stanford, at University of San Francisco, at Duke University, at the University of Alaska, at the University of Virginia, at the University of Cincinnati. Uh...

Griffin: Was she run out of town on a rail at all of those cities? That's so many schools to teach at.

Rachel: This is what I was gonna say. So, a lot of these universities will have like, a poet in residence, or a visiting poet program. And so, you can kind of make your living hopping around.

Griffin: She was not tenured, necessarily, and then just broke out like... "Here's the dark poetry from the Necronomicon!" And they're like, "You gotta get outta here! We don't do that stuff here at Duke."

Rachel: Uh, yeah. So she's just— I mean, and this is how poets make their living, right? This is why it's so hard to get a book out, is that you have to teach, and you can hop around chasing fellowships, and that's exactly what she's done. And she's continued to publish, which I think is pretty impressive.

Griffin: That's incredible.

Rachel: I read this interview with her where she talks about her most recent book, *Ledger*, that came out on March 10th, 2020, which she refers to as "the day that everything after was cancelled."

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: [laughs] Like, I can't even imagine. That's happened to a lot of writers. Like, their book comes out right at the beginning of the pandemic, and they have this whole tour planned, and everything is cancelled indefinitely.

Griffin: Yeah, I can't imagine what that's like.

Rachel: Uh, but the poem I am going to read is not from her most recent book.

Griffin: Golden oldie.

Rachel: Okay. It is from 2013. And the poem is called *My Skeleton*.

Griffin: Whoa, hold on! You gotta tell me, is this gonna be a scary one?!

Rachel: It's not spooky.

Griffin: [sighs] Alright...

Rachel: Here. I promise, I will bring a spooky poem...

Griffin: I don't want it! I don't want skeleton nightmares!

Rachel: ... as we get closer to Halloween.

Griffin: No way— oh, that would be cool, actually.

Rachel: Right?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I love theming—

Griffin: He did... the mash.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs]

Rachel: That's a call and response poem. Griffin, you do your part.

My Skeleton.

*"My skeleton,
you who once ached
with your own growing larger*

*are now,
each year
imperceptibly smaller,
lighter,*

*absorbed by your own
concentration.*

*When I danced,
you danced.
When you broke,
I.*

*And so it was lying down,
walking,
climbing the tiring stairs.
Your jaws. My bread.*

*Someday you,
what is left of you,
will be flensed of this marriage.*

*Angular wristbone's arthritis,
cracked harp of ribcage,
blunt of heel,
opened bowl of the skull,
twin platters of pelvis—
each of you will leave me behind,
at last serene.*

*What did I know of your days,
your nights,
I who held you all my life
inside my hands
and thought they were empty?*

*You who held me all my life
inside your hands
as a new mother holds
her own unblanketed child,
not thinking at all."*

Griffin: That was a little spooky.

Rachel: That is a little spooky, I guess.

Griffin: I loved it! And it was very, uh, a metaphysical riddle. I will concede that. But also, a little spooky!

Rachel: I appreciate... y'know, there's all this messaging now about having gratitude for your body. Y'know, like, not focusing as much on the shape or size, but just the fact that your body allows you to move around and do the things you want to do all day. And I feel like that poem really kind of reminds you, like, hey, you have all these bones in your body that are helping you, like, do your thing. And y'know, it's like this other part of you that meets your needs, and will continue to exist long after you are gone. Y'know? I think that's interesting.

Griffin: For sure.

Rachel: Nice. I like that.

Griffin: I genuinely loved that. It did remind me of this clip... and it's from like, a show like Kids Say the Darndest Things, where they're interviewing a child, and they say to him like, "Where do you see... where do you think you are going to be—" Or, "What do you think you're gonna look like in 50 years?" And this boy just responded, "Old bones in a grave."

Rachel: [laughs] Wow!

Griffin: Beautiful. It's probably not true, I would hope, but... wow. That's my Poetry Corner, is things kids said on television.

Rachel: She said in an interview, she really likes the relationship of like, science to poetry. And so, she likes to include little science facts where she can. So she talks about, when you do get older, that's what happens. Your bones, like, get absorbed into your body.

Griffin: Beautiful. I love it. I've got raw bone power coursing through every part of me now.

And the name of this show is now Bone Power. Thanks for listening to Bone Power. We hope you had a good time. Thanks to bo en and Augustus for the use of our theme song, "Money Won't Pay." You can find a link to that in the episode description.

Rachel: Thank you to the other Rachel who edits this show, and is very patient with us when we're running late.

Griffin: Yeah...

Rachel: And for most likely titling this episode Bone Power.

Griffin: Yeah. Some choice names that Rachel chooses from the work, which uh, I certainly appreciate. Thank you to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. Go to MaximumFun.org, check out all the great shows there. You're gonna have a hoot and a half exploring that wild wilder— hey, have you listened to Bubble? How about that?

Rachel: Whoa, hey!

Griffin: I know! You listen to Bubble, right?

Rachel: A lot has died down about Bubble, but then, uh, I think... it's very— I mean, it's timeless, y'know?

Griffin: It's timeless. It's great. Just listen to it, front to back. You'll chew right through it and have a great time doing so.

We have stuff at McElroyMerch.com. We have some shows coming up that you can find links to at Bit.ly/McElroyTours. We just announced some new ones in Denver and San Jose, at the end of September. So we're— if you live there, and I know that you probably live in San Jose... why don't you come out and see us?

Rachel: [laughs] Okay.

Griffin: And we'll have ourselves a great time. And... yeah, I guess that's it. We hope you're doing well.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It's obviously a weird time, uh, but I feel like, uh... I don't know. I feel like I'm normalizing a little bit.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: And I think it might just be the chair that I'm sitting in.

Rachel: Yeah. How did you pick this new chair, by the way?

Griffin: I... well, I climbed the mountain. That the chair... man... sits atop.

Rachel: Uh-huh. [laughs]

Griffin: You have to visit him, and he like, measures your back and...

Rachel: I was worried that this was a biblical reference that I was just totally missing.

Griffin: I climbed the mountain, and God gave me stool, and then, it did metamorphosize into a chair. Y'know, I was in the cave, I had the stool, I stepped outside, I saw the face of God in the clouds, and then the stool turned into a chair. And uh, I took it home—

Rachel: That's what—

Griffin: And the lumbar support is outta sight.

Rachel: [laughs]

[theme music plays and ends]

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