

Wonderful! 242: You Will Never Find My Oubliette

Published August 31, 2022

Listen here on themcelroy.family

[theme music plays]

Rachel:

Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin:

Hello, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel:

And this is Wonderful!

Griffin:

Welcome to Wonderful!

Rachel:

Welcome.

Griffin:

This is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel:

And this is Rachel.

Griffin:

Welcome to Wonderful!

Rachel:

This is a podcast we do.

Griffin:

We talk about things we like, things that, uh, are good, and things that we are into. And it can... And if you're... Maybe it's your first episode, and maybe you're thinking, "That sounds like an incredibly, sort of, abstract description for the podcast." Certainly, you dial in from time to time. Um,

and you're— One time, we talked about Thanksgiving foods. I think that's it, though.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Otherwise, it's a real grab bag. A real pinata of content.

Rachel:

What you have to be here for is our love, ultimately, because...

Griffin:

You must be here for our love.

Rachel:

Yeah, because a lot of times we talk about things that aren't, I mean, topical.

Griffin:

No.

Rachel:

You know, maybe not of interest to a large...

Griffin:

To anyone.

Rachel:

...number of people. [laughs]

Griffin:

You have to care about us.

Rachel:

You have to.

Griffin:

You have to care about us.

Rachel:

Period. [laughs]

Griffin:

And enjoy our enjoyment, sort of, via just, sort of, get a secondhand catharsis.

Rachel:

Uh-huh.

Griffin:

As we discuss things we like, things that are good, things we are into.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

I got a small wonder.

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

It's not small. I can't stop thinking about it. It is the television show The Resort.

Rachel:

Oh, my God.

Griffin:

On the Peacock platform. Good Lord, almighty.

Rachel:

Oh, my God. Okay. Let me just list off a few things.

Griffin:

Okay.

Rachel:

A-plus cast.

Griffin:

A— AA-plus. I would give it that rating.

Rachel:

Uh, there's— It's just like every genre.

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

You know?

Griffin:

It's got- it's got Cristin Milioti, it's got William Jackson Harper, uh, who played Chidi in Good Place, Nick Offerman's up in it...

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

...it's got Skyler Gisondo, uh, from Booksmart...

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

...uh, and, uh, The Quarry, the recent, uh, virtual horror game that I showed you cyber Gisondo's face...

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

...inside of, which is very eerie.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Uh, the ccast is out of sight.

Rachel:

And it's, like, there's, like, romance, there's mystery, there's just...

Griffin:

Super—

Rachel:

Yeah. There's like a sci-fi element.

Griffin:

Yeah. It's— It is fantastic. It is, uh, it's set in, uh, a resort in the Yucatán Peninsula, and it is— I don't wanna tell you really much anything, uh, more than that.

Rachel:

No.

Griffin:

It's got, like... I don't know that a show's mystery has hooked me this hard since, like, Lost.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

And that's about as high praise as I can possibly give...

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

...a show of this type. Um...

Rachel:

Yeah. We are all caught up. We watched the whole season thus far.

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

In a series of days.

Griffin:

It is still airing. I think there's seven episodes out, as you hear this now, and, uh, can't recommend it enough. If you are a mystery fan, uh, it's— Man alive, it's great.

Rachel:

Great.

Griffin:

Every episode, there's, like, a moment, where I'm like, "Wow. This is a really great television show, huh?"

Rachel:

Yeah. Yeah.

Griffin:

Uh, you got anything?

Rachel:

Oh. I get so caught up in your small wonders sometimes.

Griffin:

Well, I'm a weaver of dreams...

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

...and fantasies and nightmares.

Rachel:

That's true. Um, I guess I'll say, you know, our son started kindergarten.

Griffin:

He did.

Rachel:

And that's been pretty great so far.

Griffin:

Yeah. And he's already valedictorian.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Got an email this morning, like, "Your smart boy's A-plus 100%." And we're like, "Whoa. I thought they didn't do that in kindergarten."

Rachel:

I will say, the first day of school was so idyllic for us. I felt like I was living in a fantasy, because...

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

...we were able to walk into school, and it was just us and throngs of other people with their children just walking up the hill towards the school, and it was just, like, the most wholesome thing ever.

Griffin:

Very, very good, city-living stuff, which is, like, why we moved here and it was really great to see it all kind of actually happen.

Rachel:

Yeah, yeah.

Griffin:

For sure. Uh, yeah, man, it's been great.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

It's been really, really great.

Rachel:

He always... Big son comes home with just, like, the right number of anecdotes...

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

...to, like, tell us the story of his day, and they've all been so good.

Griffin:

They've been delightful. Uh, I will say, not great is that the walk we do is slightly uphill. Not a steep grade, but just enough that when I reach the school I have a flop sweat...

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

...going.

Rachel:

Well, it's 'cause the humidity's, like, 80% here.

Griffin:

Yeah. That is... We do need to do something about that.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Um, I don't know if we talk to the mayor, or who.

Rachel:

Or if we have some of our friends in Texas send us, like, a box of dry air...

Griffin:

That we can...

Rachel:

...that we release.

Griffin:

...sort of surround ourselves... Yeah.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Or I just baby powder my torso.

Rachel:

Oh.

Griffin:

Or I just exclusively wear black shirts that... But that's just gonna make me even sweatier, which no one wants to see.

Rachel:

Can I tell you that was definitely— That was a philosophy for me in high school.

Griffin:

Oh.

Rachel:

I was a very sweaty teen.

Griffin:

Wow.

Rachel:

That was kind of what puberty did to me.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

I was constantly sweaty, and the black T-shirt is always your friend.

Griffin:

Hey, speaking of sweaty teens and puberty. I'd like to talk about...

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

...my topic today.

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

I don't think you're gonna know anything about my topic, and that's okay 'cause I would like to teach you about the wonders of Neopets.

Rachel:

I am here to learn. [laughs]

Griffin:

Neopets. Um.

Rachel:

Is this something you participated in?

Griffin:

Yeah. So, Neopets came out in 1999, uh, when I was a 12-year-old boy.

Rachel:

Is this post-Tamagotchi?

Griffin:

This is in the same— It is slightly post-Tamagotchi.

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

It's very much also in that same sort of window of time. Neopets was a browser-based... Was? It is, as it's still a thing, which is wild, a browser-based virtual pet game? Question mark?

Rachel:

I had... This reminds me of a program on CD-ROM that we had at my house that was all about cats and you could have your own little cat and you could...

Griffin:

That's fine. That's fine.

Rachel:

...brush it and feed it. But it's not web-based. [laughs]

Griffin:

Yes. The web-based nature of Neopets is mostly what I'm... While I was prepping this and learning all about how Neopets changes, 'cause I have not played it since, uh, I don't know, my sophomore year of high school, maybe.

Rachel:

Can you— Do you remember anything about your pet and/or pets?

Griffin:

Uh, I had a dragon.

Rachel:

Oh. [laughs] Okay.

Griffin:

That's about it. Um, while I was sorta prepping this, I realized that, like, really, kind of what this topic is, is, like, the wonder of early internet. And I don't mean like dark laboratory early internet, but like, 'everyone has internet now' internet. Like, you got a AOL disc in the mail that gives you internet...

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

...and now, anyone can get it. Uh, I mean, not anyone, obviously, but more people have it, right? And Neopets was the first thing that I can remember doing, where I was like, "Oh. I can kind of do this thing that I like doing," which is playing a game, uh, but I can do it in websites. And how just thrilling that was a concept.

Rachel:

Did it— Was it able to, like... Did you create, like, a login? Or was it just every—

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

Okay. I didn't know if every time...

Griffin:

Yeah, I had a login.

Rachel:

...was like a fresh experience.

Griffin:

It was not, um, it was not, at least when it started out, like an animated, like, Flash or Java interactive thing. It was all websites. You would click the 'Feed My Neopet' button, and then it would take you to another webpage showing you, I don't know, a happy JPEG of your magic fox.

Rachel:

Oh, my God.

Griffin:

And it- and it shows that a bar, a number has increased, and then you refresh the page to go back to Neopia, the hub world where all of the Neopets experiences are. It's basically just, like-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

...indexed webpages. It was not like, "Press WASD to move your character around."

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

And, "Press F to launch the fireball." Like, not that. Just webpages.

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

And we fucking loved it that way.

Rachel:

[laughs] Was there like a, like a server situation, where you would...?

Griffin:

Yeah. So, it... I mean, not... Okay, so now we're getting into Club Penguin territory.

Rachel:

I do know about that.

Griffin:

Okay. You know about it, and I'm guessing you didn't experience it.

Rachel:

No. I didn't.

Griffin:

Okay.

Rachel:

No, I was working at a Boys & Girls club, and we would bring the kids to a computer lab and they would be allowed to access a certain number of websites, and one of them was Club Penguin.

Griffin:

Was Club Penguin.

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

Club Penguin was way more interactive. It had like actual interactive games, which I'm sure Neopets... I know, for a fact, Neopets now, like, has that stuff. Uh, but this was... This was not that. This was just... It was the

equivalent of playing, like, an adventure game on a graphing calculator. Like, that's about the level of interactivity that we were talking about. Uh, but it was a huge monster hit.

I have very wrongly assumed that it was just this weird corner of the internet that people of my generation, and honestly probably younger than me, like, remember fondly, uh, but wasn't, like, uh, a phenomenon. I am super wrong about that. Basically, it launched in November 1999, and by the end of the year it was getting, like, 600,000 page views a day which, for the era, is so much.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

So, so much. They had to, like, find investors right away 'cause they couldn't afford to keep this thing alive. Uh, and, uh, they went on to sell it to Viacom, uh, who basically used it as, like, an advertising platform for Nickelodeon and the products that they advertised. Uh, they sold it for, like, \$160 million in 2004. So, like, it was not some weird little, you know, uh, corner of the internet like the many, many, like, flash cartoon websites that existed around that time. Like, this was a monster thing.

They had toys for sale at, like, Target and other big stores, like, in the early aughts. Uh, they had, like, Happy Meal toys of Neopets. All of this stuff that I don't— I did not know, really, was, uh, part of the wave.

Rachel:

So, there— Was there, like, a limit, like you couldn't customize? Or were there, like, set characters? Like, how do you make a toy out of something that is so individual?

Griffin:

You didn't really customize, right? Like, there were different breeds of Neopets that you could- that you could find. Very, very, very limited number of them at the start of Neopets.

Rachel:

Oh. I think I should ask too. Were these, like, real deal animals, or were they like Pokemon?

Griffin:

It ran the gamut.

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

Some real deal animals, some, like, weird...

Rachel:

You did say dragon earlier.

Griffin:

Yeah. Not real animal, like dragon. Except Komodo dragon, which is confusing to our sons...

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

...and me, uh, an adult. Um, yeah. You could, like... The level of interactivity, eventually they would add, like, a battle mode where you could make the pets fight. Uh, and other sort of very, like, rudimentary interactive elements. But for the most part, it was like, "I'm gonna go to the video store with my Neopet to find it a video to increase its mood."

Rachel:

Oh, my God.

Griffin:

Or, "I'm going to the pet store to get my Neopet a pet, which was called, if memory serves...

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

...a pet-pet.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Which is very good. Or, "I'm gonna get this magic paint brush that's gonna change the color of my Neopet to some rare variant, and then people will see it and think I'm cool."

Rachel:

How did you get currency?

Griffin:

Uh, through Neopoints, uh, is, I believe, what they are called. Uh, and some of that was through the very limited game interactive elements. There was a tree that you could go to, I think, like, once a day to, like, get a gift. And so...

Rachel:

Oh.

Griffin:

...you would see, like, maybe it was Neopoints, maybe it was a, you know, some paint brush, maybe it was X, Y, or Z, right? Um, it was not a great game, but there was something really, really exciting about loading up Internet Explorer, which you could do from any computer at the library or at your school or at home, and access this game that could be anywhere all at once, right? That was, uh, such a foreign concept back when Neopets first launched, and was just enough to be, like, "Oh my God."

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

"This is something that we can do." And obviously, like, if you take that idea to its, you know, inevitable extreme where we are now with, like, you know, the biggest company in the world investing in metaverse shit, like, it kind of follows that— There's like a through— There's like a thread connecting those between Neopets and the metaverse.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

The matrix.

Rachel:

Uh-huh.

Griffin:

Um, and that's just wild. But to, like, extrapolate that out, there was so much stuff about the early internet that wasn't like, "Oh, here's a different version of this thing," or, "Here's a different way to do this thing with the internet." It was realizing the capabilities of, like, what the internet, as a service, could do. Like, "Oh, shit. I can play a game on here that's accessible from anywhere," or, uh, "Oh, shit. I can download..." I'm really aging myself, but, like, They Might Be Giants released an MP3-only album and, like, it made headlines. And it was so, like...

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

"Oh, shit. Like, I can just download this from my computer, legally, and listen to or burn it to a CD." Like, there were all of these things that were thrilling because they felt like discoveries. They felt like genuine innovations that would change the way that, like, I consumed media. And I don't know that, like, we are going to hit a sprint like that in my lifetime again.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Maybe we will. But, like, now it's, uh, NFTs, which, like, Neopets recently dabbled in, much to the...

Rachel:

Oh. [laughs]

Griffin:

...chagrin of their, uh, vocal community. Um, it— And this is not old man yells at cloud shit. Like, I, you know, obviously, am very invested in tech shit and gaming stuff and...

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

...am very excited about where all that is going. But there was this age of innocence where we had a computer in our house, we got the internet on it. And then for the next, like, four years, just constantly, it was like, "Oh my God," like, "I can do— I can do that?"

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

"On internet?"

Rachel:

I can't imagine what it's like, all of you sharing that space.

Griffin:

Bad.

Rachel:

Yeah. [laughs]

Griffin:

It was very bad.

Rachel:

'Cause that's what I used to do. I used to come home from school and I would immediately get on the computer.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Until dinner time, basically.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

You know, playing my games and talking to my friends.

Griffin:

I mean, there was a time where me, Justin, Travis, and dad were all playing EverQuest.

Rachel:

[laughs] Yeah. I can't.

Griffin:

On our one computer.

Rachel:

Did you have a schedule? Did you have, like, a set, posted...?

Griffin:

We had time limits.

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

Uh, so, it was like an hour. We could play EverQuest for an hour, and then, uh, had to get bumped off. But then we also, uh, didn't have broadband until we were, I don't know...

Rachel:

Yeah, 'cause your phone line. Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

Yeah. And so, like, we couldn't—

Rachel:

That was a big deal.

Griffin:

...get calls.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

We had some app or some software downloaded where, like, if you did get a phone call people could, like, leave a message and you would hear it. But, like, if I'm raiding, you know, the lower...

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

...the lower Guck, I'm not gonna just, like, stop my raid. Do you know what I mean?

Rachel:

Ah, yeah.

Griffin:

Like, sorry, aunt Dana. Like, I know it's urgent and...

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

...you need us to get back to you. But, like, I'm trying to farm ogres, or whatever.

Rachel:

Uh-huh.

Griffin:

Anyway. All that to say, I'm a million years old.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

No. All that to say, like, I don't know. I loved that era because it felt so unpredictable. Because there also wasn't, like, there weren't blogs, necessarily, that I was following. It was all word of mouth. And so, you would hear about, like... I remember the first time somebody brought me to their house, and showed me like, "Oh yeah. I downloaded all this shit on Napster and, uh, do you want a CD?" And I was like, "What?"

Rachel:

[laughs] Yeah.

Griffin:

All of that was, like, super, super fun and exciting. And I also know, like, looking back it now, I would feel like a space alien if I could go back to those days, and be like...

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

"Yeah, guys, that's a picture of a wolf. You need to calm down."

Rachel:

I was just talking to my friend the other day about that. Her daughter just started college and is, you know, kind of having that moment, of like, "How do I make friends?" And I was telling her like, "Oh yeah. I used to walk around the quad with my Discman at night, uh, by myself." And just, that concept of carrying around [laughs]...

Griffin:

Yeah, I know.

Rachel:

...a Discman is insane.

Griffin:

Yeah. Anyway. Uh, I'm uncomfortable with how, sort of, like, uh, back in my day, this bit was. Um.

Rachel:

No. I think you have appropriately focused on the advance of technology and not this nostalgia.

Griffin:

It wasn't— It wasn't better than it is now.

Rachel:

Yeah. No.

Griffin:

'Cause, like, obviously now, like, I can put a...

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

...fucking, like, three pound headset on my face and be in virtual reality, like anywhere.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Like, that's undeniably very sick.

Rachel:

Of course, yeah.

Griffin:

Uh, but, man, it was just— You felt like just the Gods were coming down from the mountain, like every week like, "Oh. You wanna watch a movie on your computer?"

Rachel:

[laughs] Yeah.

Griffin:

Anyway. Can I steal you away?

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

Cool.

Griffin:

We have a Grumbo Bob here and I... Can I read it? 'Cause it is for future Isabel, Phillip and Noel. And it is from past Isabel, who screamed into the time tunnel, "Hi, future Isabel, Philip and Noel. You're all wonderful, and I hope you're enjoying some of your favorite wonders; ice cream, poll, Veronica Mars, Satay prawns." I almost said stray prawns. Prawns that— free-range prawns they broke out of the containment unit. No. "Satay prawns, couch cuddles, Pokemon, Mount StromIo, roo tails, and, of course, your family, near and far. Sydney trip soon! Glad Bethany got you onto the McElroy, and Zelda shares the love with you."

Rachel:

There's a lot of Australia in this.

Griffin:

There's a tremendous amount of Australia. It took me on a journey, I would say, to the— to below the equator, uh, and I had a great time. Went to the opera house.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Hung out with all my Australian friends.

Rachel:

Uh-huh.

Griffin:

Uh, I have...

Rachel:

Did other Australia things.

Griffin:

Did other Australia things.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

That I— I do know about.

Rachel:

Uh-huh.

Griffin:

Beach. Beach.

Rachel:

Mm. Yes.

Griffin:

Bondi Beach.

Rachel:

Yeah. What did we watch? We watched some kind of, like...

Griffin:

It was humiliating— Whatever it was is not the kind of...

Rachel:

[laughs] Vacation property show.

Griffin:

...thing I wanna talk about on the show.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Yeah. [laughs]

Griffin:

Anyway. Have a— Have a good Australia.

[ad break]

Adam Pranica:

This week, The Greatest Discovery becomes Greatest Trek.

Benjamin Harrison:

That's because Greatest Trek is for way more than just discovery.

Adam Pranica:

We're the hit show on Maximum Fun that covers all the new Star Trek shows. Lower Decks, Strange New Worlds, Picard, Prodigy, Discovery, and any other Star Trek show Paramount throws at us.

Benjamin Harrison:

Come check it out for our funny and formative recaps of all the new stuff that Star Trek industrial complex churns out. It's in your podcatcher every Tuesday.

Adam Pranica:

Subscribe to Greatest Trek. It's a new Star Trek podcast from the makers The Greatest Generation.

Annabelle Gurwitch:

Hey, there. It's Annabelle Gurwitch.

Laura House:

And I'm Laura House. We host Tiny Victories, the 15-minute podcast that's about the little things.

Annabelle Gurwitch:

Get into the tiny victory frame of mind is about recognizing minor accomplishments and fleeting joys.

Laura House:

Isn't it a wonderful day when the first password you try actually works?

Speaker 1:

When it's freezing cold outside and toasty as all get out in my shower. My tiny victory is that I turn off the water and get on with my day.

Laura House:

We can't change this big, dumb world. But we can celebrate the tiny wins.

Annabelle Gurwitch:

So, join us on Maximum Fun, or wherever you listen to podcasts. Let's get tiny!

Laura House:

Let's get tiny!

[ad break ends]

Rachel:

You ready?

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

My topic...

Griffin:

Yep. Yep.

Rachel:

...this week is the secret passageway.

Griffin:

Ooh.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

Just the general idea of a...

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

...of a hidden— Okay.

Rachel:

Yeah. I mean, the fact that they can... I mean, they have obviously existed in television and film and literature.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Uh, but, like, this is a real thing that...

Griffin:

Yeah, for sure.

Rachel:

...like, you see now in buildings and has a kind of, in a lot of ways, always existed, uh, which is super cool. [laughs]

Griffin:

Yeah, absolutely.

Rachel:

I feel like my introduction to it was probably The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, and that, you know, wasn't, like, functional in the way that, you know, it is in other...

Griffin:

What do you mean?

Rachel:

...pieces of media. Well, just the idea that you would walk through a wardrobe and end up in a fantasy land.

Griffin:

Yeah. No, that was sorta the whole...

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

...conceit of the [crosstalk].

Rachel:

Not like in the more traditional sense of, like, you lift a book on a bookcase and it swings open.

Griffin:

Are we sure that they didn't just have a big, sort of, annex on that...

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

...house, that that rich weird family had that just you went through the wardrobe? And it was actually a functioning door to, like, this... That would be a different, sort of, story all together.

Rachel:

Yeah, right? Because then, like, then the creatures, they can come in to your space.

Griffin:

They can come in to... Oh. No, thank you.

Rachel:

Yeah. It's a little too much, having a lion in your bedroom.

Griffin:

Aslan, like, great dude.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Great hang. Do not need a lion...

Rachel:

Uh-huh.

Griffin:

...in my real house where I eat and sleep and take care of two kids.

Rachel:

[laughs] Just stand at your refrigerator, in the middle of the night.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Like, going through your leftovers.

Griffin:

I don't need to see that.

Rachel:

No.

Griffin:

I'll come to you, Aslan.

Rachel:

[laughs] Uh, so, super functional. Like, now it's just kind of like a novelty thing for...

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

...most people. Uh, but in history, uh, prohibition, obviously, speakeasies, like...

Griffin:

Love it.

Rachel:

...getting to where you could get the illegal alcohol. Uh, also in medieval castles.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

You know, like trying to escape. Um, and...

Griffin:

I know in some, like, uh, like, European cities they have alleys that are, like, intentionally kind of confusing for, sort of, general defense purposes.

Rachel:

Yeah. Uh, and also, underground railroad.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Lot of secret passageways.

Griffin:

Definitely.

Rachel:

Um, I, uh, I was trying to think. Like, how is this a thing in media? You know, like, I know I've seen this in a number of things. My immediate recognition was through those, like, choose your adventure books.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Uh, and obviously, like, Scooby-Doo.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Um, but also, The Addams Family, uh, had the book that said 'greed' on it, and that was how you would get into it.

Griffin:

Oh. That was in The Addams Family?

Rachel:

Uh-huh.

Griffin:

Okay. Interesting.

Rachel:

Young Frankenstein with the candle stick.

Griffin:

So fucking funny. That is always the very first thing that comes to mind.

Rachel:

[laughs] Uh-huh.

Griffin:

"Put the candle down."

Rachel:

Um, Indiana Jones, uh, Last Crusade.

Griffin:

Oh yeah.

Rachel:

Uh, there's a lot there.

Griffin:

There is.

Rachel:

Um, so, the thing that made me think of this. Our house currently has a lot of, like, those cabinet doors that you kind of push to open.

Griffin:

Yeah. Like, they have a magnetic latch that you have to kind of push in and pull out to disengage.

Rachel:

Yeah. And so, one wall of our entry way is like closet space. And so, we have, like, coats, and then Griffin has some, like, tools and we have reusable bags. And then one of the doors you push and it opens to our downstairs.
[laughs]

Griffin:

Yeah. But is indistinguishable...

Rachel:

Yeah. And so...

Griffin:

...from the rest of the stuff.

Rachel:

...it's a real fun show piece for us so far when people come over. And it's also a really great way to, like, sell a playroom to Henry 'cause it's like you're gonna have, like, a secret entrance to your playroom.

Griffin:

Yeah, which is fun now. It will be less fun when he's, you know, down there, playing violent games...

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

...without us knowing and smoking reefer.

Rachel:

[laughs] Uh-huh. I mean, I don't know. It's not hurting anyone.

Griffin:

I guess we... I mean, if he's five, it is.

Rachel:

Well, yeah. [laughs] I'm hopeful that we have a little time before that happens.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Um, so, there's, like, companies now that do this.

Griffin:

That is not surprising at all.

Rachel:

Uh, you can go to a company called Creative Home Engineering, uh, and they specialize in building concealed doors into bookshelves, walls, mirrors, wardrobes, staircases, closets, fireplaces, and even vintage phone booths.

Griffin:

Hmm.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

I think I've done a segment on Richard Garriott's castle.

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

Okay.

Rachel:

Yeah. That was the other thing.

Griffin:

I just wanted to make sure we hadn't duplicated...

Rachel:

Uh-huh.

Griffin:

...this topic before.

Rachel:

Uh, and, uh, I will also say this is like a thing in, like, offices now, like companies. Like, you had mentioned this...

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

...right? At Polygon at one point.

Griffin:

Yeah. I think I can say this because the Vox office isn't there anymore. But the floor that the Vox office was on had, like, a bookshelf right behind the front entrance reception that had— It wasn't like you pull a book. It was like a magnet lock, only, like, the magnet was in some book that you had to position and adjust the right way, and then it would disengage the lock and open the thing. It was very cool. But also, like, we had so much equipment in that room...

Rachel:

Yeah. [laughs]

Griffin:

...in that airtight room.

Rachel:

It was, like, boiling hot.

Griffin:

It was constantly sweltering.

Rachel:

Yeah. It's never... I mean, in the olden days, super functional. Now, kind of a novelty more than anything.

Griffin:

Abs— It's a hundred percent a novelty.

Rachel:

There are lot of companies that do it, uh, to kind of, like, generate buzz about their workplaces.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

You know, like, when you bring people there, they're super excited. Uh, Google has a reading area hidden behind a bookcase. Uh, Weber Shandwick, which is a marketing company, has a wall-to-wall bookcase with a section that can be pushed in.

Griffin:

Of course.

Rachel:

Uh, Shudder Stock in the Empire State building, uh, has, like, a whole, like, area, uh, that you can sneak away for, like, table tennis, yoga.

Griffin:

That's fine.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

I want something like...

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

...dangerous. Don't you? Like, if we were to do this, like, I would want a chess set where you have to arrange the pieces in a very specific way.

Rachel:

Uh-huh.

Griffin:

And then, like, a hole opens in the ground, to, like, a 50-foot ladder, down to just, like, this dank oubliette that is inescapable. And you keep, like, books down there as a...

Rachel:

Yes. I was gonna say, why would you wanna go down there? [laughs]

Griffin:

Well, the books have, like, bones and stuff on them. Like, bone book.

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

Like scary bone books...

Rachel:

Uh-huh.

Griffin:

...that have, like, um...

Rachel:

Is this like an Evil Dead reference right now?

Griffin:

No. I mean, it's not— The Necronomicon is a fake thing. But bone books...

Rachel:

[laughs] Bone books.

Griffin:

...which are books that have bones on them that do have scary incantations and stuff.

Rachel:

Uh-huh. Or a possibly an episode of Wishbone that has worked its way into your subconscious.

Griffin:

Yes. Also, bone books does sound like pornographic magazines.

Rachel:

[laughs] Oh, no. I didn't even think of that.

Griffin:

Well, now you have.

Rachel:

Yeah. [laughs]

Griffin:

And it is. I would keep, in my chess oubliette, my bone books. [laughs]

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Uh, I would not tell you about it. You would never find my oubliette. It would be a secret to everyone.

Rachel:

Uh, yeah. So, I mean, honestly, I don't have a whole lot more than that.

Griffin:

Oh, great.

Rachel:

Other than, it's super great. There is a place that I was taken to in D.C. called The Mirror.

Griffin:

Oh, yeah.

Rachel:

I was in town visiting my friends, and it's this bar. It's like a what looks like an abandoned storefront, and you go downstairs and you walk in and there's just a big, full-sized mirror on the wall. And it is a door into a hidden bar.

Griffin:

That's fun.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

I went to a place, I think, in East Village, uh, that my friends took me to that is like a hotdog restaurant. But there's a phone booth, and you pickup the phone and you talk to the receptionist, like, on the other end.

Rachel:

Oh, my God.

Griffin:

And then the back wall of the phone booth opens up and it lets you into, like, a very hip cocktail bar.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

It was very fun and also good cocktails. And then, when I had had a few drinks, good hotdogs.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

It was like the ideal evening.

Rachel:

Yeah, that sounds like it was designed specifically for you.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Uh, yeah. It's, like, almost too much. There's a part of me that kind of bristles at it, 'cause I'm like, "This is too much. This is silly."

Griffin:

But you want one too.

Rachel:

But then, it's also kind of like, I'm really glad that people are doing this.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

It is silly, but it is adventurous, uh, and I like that combination.

Griffin:

I do, too. Uh, I also like Bo en and Augustus because they let us use, uh, our theme song Money Won't Pay, which you can find a link to in the episode description. Um, as long as we're talking about things we like, MaximumFun.org has all the podcasts that your body craves.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Um, and you need to listen to your body sometimes, 'cause sometimes it's like, "Stop Podcasting Yourself."

Rachel:

I would encourage those of you who are members that had access to bonus content, you still have that access and some shows are still putting out new content, and Stop Podcasting Yourself is one of them.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

They put out, like, new monthly content in that feed, so get over there.

Griffin:

On their grind.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

Those gentlemen are. Uh, we have merch over at McElroyMerch.com. We got some shows coming up. Uh, you can find out all about that at bit.ly/McElroyTour. Uh, or perhaps McElroyTours. You know what? Just go to McElroy.family, and I'm sure you'll find a link.

Rachel:

Yeah, that's what I do.

Griffin:

We got stuff coming up in Denver, Detroit, Cincinnati, Washington D.C. We are also gonna be at DragonCon this weekend.

Rachel:

Yeah, this weekend.

Griffin:

Uh, so, if you're in Atlanta and you're coming to DragonCon, uh, go to that McElroy.family website. You can find, uh, all of our scheduled stuff. We got some photo op stuff and a few panels and, uh, a bunch of fun stuff that we're gonna be doing while we're there. I think that's it.

Rachel:

[laughs] Uh-huh.

Griffin:

Did I say that loud?

Rachel:

Yeah. It seemed very loud to me.

Griffin:

Okay. Well, why don't you... Now I feel self-conscious.

Rachel:

And see, I always try to be too casual. This is why we're a good balance.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

You know?

Griffin:

You know, it reminds me of two...

Rachel:

[laughs] Two characters.

Griffin:

...characters.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

One of which was very, sort of, cool and, sort of, level-headed. And the other character was, sort of, a foil to that.

Rachel:

This leads me...

Griffin:

Because she was, like, very weird and spirited and loud.

Rachel:

[laughs] This leads me to a, uh, something I wanna put out in the universe, which is, um, how do we get somebody involved with that program...

Griffin:

Hmm.

Rachel:

...to sit down with us, make a decision as to our Dharma and Gregness.

Griffin:

Oh, okay.

Rachel:

And that's our bonus episode. Can we make some phone calls and see if we can make that happen?

Griffin:

We probably could get Jenna Elfman on the horn.

Rachel:

I wouldn't even— I wouldn't just—

Griffin:

Don't even.

Rachel:

I wouldn't even need... I mean, obviously incredible. That's number one on my list. But...

Griffin:

I think I accidentally met Chuck Lorre once.

Rachel:

[laughs] Yeah. I don't want him. I don't want him. But somebody, like even somebody who just, like, you know, was like a PA or something. Like, they don't even have to be, like, number one on the call sheet.

Griffin:

If you worked on Dharma and Greg...

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

...or know someone who did, call our hotline.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

[laughs]

[theme music plays]

MaximumFun.org.

Comedy and culture.

Artist-owned.

Audience-supported.