

## Wonderful! 54: Corn Cauldron

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[theme music plays]

**Rachel:**

Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

**Griffin:**

Hey, what's up? This is Griffin McElroy.

**Rachel:**

This is wonderful.

**Griffin:**

[sings] Cha-cha-cha-cha-changes, turn and change the, change. There's a lot of changes in the studio is why I sing that song, Rachel looks at me confused. But you know this has to be true.

**Rachel:**

No, I do know this is to be true. Um, but I don't really think of what you've been through recently as a cha-cha-change, as a cha-change.

**Griffin:**

Well, there's lots of changes. Let's break them down one by one.

**Rachel:**

Okay.

**Griffin:**

Number one—

**Rachel:**

All right.

**Griffin:**

Got a new schnoz, didn't I?

**Rachel:**

Well...

**Griffin:**

Cyber schnoz, basically here to produce better sound.

**Rachel:**

It's more like a renovation on your schnoz.

**Griffin:**

Yeah, I got some acoustic experts to dig around my nose. And they were like, "This thing is not optimized for audio. Um, and we could install some baffling here. And we could drop this wall and do sort of an open concept." So basically, I have one big nostril now, which is so cool.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:**

Uh, it makes it easier for, you know, the picking.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:**

Um, so yeah, it's cool. Now I had sinus surgery, I'm still recovering from it. It was fucking brutal, it is so bad. Um, but thank you for your prayers, everyone. I don't think I've publicly talked about my sinus surgery, but I just assumed you could feel my distress and you're praying for it. The other change though, big change is right under Rachel's keister, isn't it? Wanna talk about it?

**Rachel:**

[laughs] On our last episode, you may recall I referenced the piano bench that I sit on. Uh, and so Griffin went out today. Spared no expense.

**Griffin:**

Nope.

**Rachel:**

Bought me a folding chair.

**Griffin:**

I went to, uh, Target. You remember that fucking real funny sketches?

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh.

**Griffin:**

Yeah, it's a folding chair. And I know you're thinking like, "Uh, really?" It's got pads.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

It's got a big pad under the duff. It's got a pad under... the behind the back. I was at Target for other reasons. I saw the folding chair. I thought—

**Rachel:**

Let's say you're going over to your grandma's house for Thanksgiving and she set up a table in the garage. This is the chair you would sit on.

**Griffin:**

Exactly. The funny chair. Don't you think you could turn... What's great about that chair, it's a clean slate babe. My piano bench, I use it for my art and my compositions.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm. You think that was like intimidating to me?

**Griffin:**

No, but it's just not for jokes, do you know what I'm saying?

**Rachel:**

Yeah, okay, okay.

**Griffin:**

It's all about, you know, the fifths and the, you know, metal, metal for a day. Um, but you could make jokes on it. That chair has nothing in it so far. You are going to fill it with... well, first of all—

**Rachel:**

My caboose.

**Griffin:**

... the farts. But also—

**Rachel:**

Griffin.

**Griffin:**

... your jokes.

**Rachel:**

Griffin.

**Griffin:**

Hey man.

**Rachel:**

It's not a lot of difference between my farts and my jokes, am I right?

**Griffin:**

Hey, no.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

I won't allow that kind of talk here. Anyway, it's a brave new era for Wonderful 2.0, new schnoz, new chair.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:**

I feel like I sound weird. I feel like I'm gonna feel like I sound weird for a long time until—

**Rachel:**

Yeah, I just don't... honestly, I don't hear a lot of difference.

**Griffin:**

It's not going to be permanent if I do, I'm still very, very much recovering, but yikes. Okay, anyway, you got any small wonders because I have one and it's stool softener. It's—it's so special to me today. Um, it's been so

special to me today. And I won't get into it. But it's so special and so necessary and mandatory to me today—

**Rachel:**

If you guys are uncomfortable—

**Griffin:**

... medical reason.

**Rachel:**

... you're uncomfortable right now, the level of detail. Welcome to the past week for me.

**Griffin:**

I'm sorry that my convalescence as I pursue a healthier better life is so—

**Rachel:**

No, I'm sorry to interrupt. Talk more about your stool.

**Griffin:**

... inconvenient. No, I'm not gonna talk about my stool. I'm just gonna say stool softeners and pretty amazing drug when you need it. When you need it, and I'm not gonna comment on whether or not I need it. Maybe I'm free basing, maybe I'm taking it recreationally. Maybe it's just like how they taste, they get these... because we have the little gel capsule, I'll chew them on up in there. No big deal. Anyway, uh—

**Rachel:**

I haven't shared my small wonder yet.

**Griffin:**

Yeah, you got one?

**Rachel:**

Yeah. [laughs] I went to the Janelle Monáe concert last night.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

I went to an ACL taping. Griffin, uh, had free tickets and was not up for going.

**Griffin:**

No, no, no.

**Rachel:**

So I—

**Griffin:**

See, see stool softener.

**Rachel:**

... with our friend Stephanie.

**Griffin:**

Yes.

**Rachel:**

I went to the ACL taping and it was incredible. So, so good.

**Griffin:**

I am very jealous. I wish I could have gone. I'm sure it was like the most fun show. And we've talked about ACL before.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm. Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Um, and how, how dope the like free tickets... we're like so, I don't know. You and I are so lucky. It's like the wish or the secret. Is it called the wish or the secret? I'm working on a sequel called "The Wish" where just like, a concert gets announced and it's like, "I want to go to that." We both enter, one of us almost always wins. It's amazing, it's like our only... it's like a superpower.

Um, I also want to bring—I've consumed so much media because I had basically have been on the couch for a week. Um, re-watched the Lord of the Rings, movie's still, still a nice watch, and I got into Professor Layton, I think you would get into these games. It's basically about this guy who is like a puzzle solver.

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh.

**Griffin:**

Uh, and he has a little boy detective sort of, uh, uh, accomplice and they go to like towns and they investigate these big mysteries, but they do so... well like solving little puzzles and brain teasers.

**Rachel:**

I do like puzzles and brain.

**Griffin:**

I do too and these games has like, has like really fun ones, but also like a story that you're like trying to solve and you're like, "Oh-oh, this guy got murdered. I'm going to do this puzzle where I have to move a matchstick from one place to the other to solve it." Uh, it's, it's really good. It's on iPhone. It's like 10 bucks, but it's worth.

**Rachel:**

Oh, 10 bucks.

**Griffin:**

Oh, I mean, it's a part of a Nintendo DS game. And when it came out on DS was like, 30 bucks. It's like a, it's like a game. It's like an actual game, one like, like, uh, a \$1, you know?

**Rachel:**

Yeah, I'm so used to those, those free ones.

**Griffin:**

Yeah, I don't know. I think it's worth it to drop, you know, 15 bucks on iPhone game, if it's going to be like really good. And you're gonna play it for a long time but—

**Rachel:**

It makes sense.

**Griffin:**

... I go first this week. My first thing is a nice light jacket. I have this thought today, I was at the Target and the Target—

**Rachel:**

Did you buy a jacket?

**Griffin:**

Um, no, but I tried on a few jackets and I realized that, um, I own basically every type of model of light—

**Rachel:**

That is very true.

**Griffin:**

... jacket.

**Rachel:**

That's why I was asking if you bought another one.

**Griffin:**

No, Rachel can attest, this is my favorite type of... this my favorite garment category.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Um, and there's a lot of reasons, there's, there's... first of all, there's two seasons where you can wear these things, right? Spring and fall. That makes it a very, very versatile sort of piece, of piece of kit, right? Summer, summer where you can't wear non summer months, but a nice light jacket. You can wear that in spring you can wear that in fall, you can winter that anywhere where it's going to be maybe a little bit cold and I'm talking about here like a hoodie or a windbreaker or like a waterproof poncho or a jean jacket.

Travis got me a jean jacket for my birthday this year, that thing's getting some fucking heavy use. It's a very nice jean jacket. Um, a, a blazer maybe basically anything not like insulated like a non-insulated heavy coat.

**Rachel:**

What is it about, uh, the jacket that appeals to you so much, you know?

**Griffin:**

Um, I mean, they're functional, right? They can—

**Rachel:**

Is it like the fashion of it?



**Griffin:**

I—that's definitely another reason. The, the, function I think, I don't know which comes first. The function I appreciate, the function of like, "I need to get my body temperature just right. It's like a few degrees off."

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:**

I'll put on this nice light jacket. And that'll like... that'll usually get me there. I always bring a nice light jacket into the movie theater. Like—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... literally every, every time I go into—

**Rachel:**

That's true.

**Griffin:**

... a movie theater, because you never know. Sometimes a movie theater, it's going to be cold and you have to have the nice light jacket to like—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... because I don't want to be distracted when I'm up there watching, you know, um, you know, Spider Man, uh—

**Rachel:**

Dirty Grandpa.

**Griffin:**

... like when I'm watching Dirty Grandpa. My favorite movie ever.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm. Now I know we haven't talked about that on the show. I guess that, that could be a whole week.

**Griffin:**

Is that the Johnny Knoxville one or is that the, uh, I almost said Al Pacino, Robert De Niro and there, there's—

**Rachel:**

There's Bad Grandpa.

**Griffin:**

Yes.

**Rachel:**

And Dirty Grandpa.

**Griffin:**

Wow. Movies are good and they should keep making them. The... we shouldn't change how we make movies even a little bit. Um, so the function is important to me. I, they... also, another function extra pockets, right?

**Rachel:**

Yeah, that's true.

**Griffin:**

Holy shit, you get two extra pockets. And, um, well, I take Henry to daycare every day and, you know, usually I'm carrying a ton of shit out to the car with me. Um, I have like you know the child and one arm and then like a backpack and some water and some snacks and the other arm.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:**

I can't be carrying my keys around and like I don't want to dig around in my, you know, jeans pocket to get my keys out to like get in the car. That's why I have hoodie pocket which is basically a fucking keys holster.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Easy access, get in get out. No problem.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:**

Extra pockets...

**Rachel:**

Extra pockets.

**Griffin:**

... is very good. But then the fashion is also good like you could layer things. It gives you an extra sort of dimension of, of style.

**Rachel:**

Can I tell you last week I almost brought hoodie. And then I thought, "No, if anyone deserves to bring this, it's Griffin."

**Griffin:**

It's true.

**Rachel:**

Griffin loves a hoodie.

**Griffin:**

I do like a hoodie. I have, I have, I have quite a few, um, I don't know I just feel like my, my style these days is very simple. Uh, very sort of survival based, um-

**Rachel:**

I feel like you also dress in perpetual fall. I feel like the Griffin McElroy wardrobe is always fall, no matter the time of year.

**Griffin:**

Except when it would be dangerous to do otherwise. I do try to do a fall, a fall look.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. I mean it suits you for sure. I like it.

**Griffin:**

It, it... I just like how you can, um, you know, if you have like a nasty shirt, nasty t-shirt—

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:**

... riddled with coffee stains and other, you know, other stains or holes and pizza stains.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:**

Uh, you've got a hoodie over that and nobody needs to know your horrible secrets that you did to the shirt.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

You can also dress down a nice button up that's... that can be a fun look like a nice button up, you know, got like a nice gingham pattern and you throw a hoodie on over that and now all of a sudden you're, you know, Silicon Valley investor. I take it back, that's not it. Don't do that look, but you can throw a nice jean jacket on over that look. Now we're talking about style layers.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, uh-huh.

**Griffin:**

This has been put this on—

**Rachel:**

I know, I was gonna say it—

**Griffin:**

No, I just like I don't know... I like, I like the, I like the look of a nice leather jacket, I do.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

So, so sue me.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

But the biggest reason is how like modular it is. You can, you can take it on... it gives you options. If you're getting cold, you put the jacket on, if you're getting hot, take the jacket off, if your friends getting cold, you give them the jacket.

**Rachel:**

Wait, slow down, slow down, slow down.

**Griffin:**

Okay. Take notes. If spill something on your shirt suddenly, you put the jacket back on. If you spill something on your pants, you tie it around your waist like you're a 1990 skateboarder.

**Rachel:**

Can tell you something kind of embarrassing?

**Griffin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Rachel:**

Uh, I get sweaty.

**Griffin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Rachel:**

It's nice to have a, a long sleeve to put over the sweatiness—

**Griffin:**

Oh, stains, the pit stains.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, I don't know what it is. That's another show.

**Griffin:**

That's another show. It's pit stains, it's such a good name for... What would that show... what would that be about?

**Rachel:**

Ready, sweaty.

**Griffin:**

Ready, sweaty, go.

**Rachel:**

That's nice.

**Griffin:**

Uh, that can be fun. Um, yeah, I just, I've always loved a nice jacket. I, my... I think seventh birthday, we went to the Gym Factory, which is in West Virginia—

**Rachel:**

Yeah, you're gonna have to explain what that is.

**Griffin:**

Sure. So the Gym Factory was simultaneously a fun place for young kids to go and do gymnastics. Uh, they had like a rope swing over like a pit full of like foam geometric shapes that you could like drop down—

**Rachel:**

Yeah, mm-hmm.

**Griffin:**

... into. They had like, the runway of trampoline floor that you could like go and do stuff.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

And then you know, they had the usual gymnastic stuff.

**Rachel:**

Even at the nighttime.

**Griffin:**

And then in, on Friday nights, it was the teen dance center. And there's like a back room back there which I don't know what it was used for other than this, but like teens would go to listen to, um, a popular music and literally just bump and grind on... it was just like a secret... And I don't know how like common this is, if this was like a thing that was like present in every town like the teen dance club.

**Rachel:**

See, I went to teen nights at the YMCA when I was in middle school.

**Griffin:**

Oh, we had that too, that.... I remember that being definitely, uh, more above board. This was, this was, this was very, this was very bad. This is very not good.

**Rachel:**

You had to know somebody to get in.

**Griffin:**

Anyway, I had a seventh birthday at the Gym Factory in the day time. And I was wearing a, I was wearing a sports themed windbreaker suit—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... over—

**Rachel:**

Turtleneck?

**Griffin:**

... a white turtleneck.

**Rachel:**

Oh, gosh, it's good.

**Griffin:**

It's a class—how did you know that?

**Rachel:**

Because that was like the look.

**Griffin:**

Was it?

**Rachel:**

Like the, the turtleneck under the windbreaker thing. It was... it's a very like, early '90s look.

**Griffin:**

Damn, I thought I was a fucking fashion pioneer. Um, but you know, I do some gymnastics. I get sweaty, I put the jacket on. Easy, breezy, beautiful, easy light jacket. Get one. You can have one of mine. I got 306. What's your first thing?

**Rachel:**

Uh, so I decided this week... It's been, you know, kind of a tumultuous few days.

**Griffin:**

Sure fucking has.

**Rachel:**

... and whenever I feel a little adrift, I like to return to the Poetry Corner.

**Griffin:**

Oh, yeah. It's my anchor.

**Rachel:**

So I have a poem that I'd like to bring.

**Griffin:**

Can I sing the theme song?

**Rachel:**

Yeah, please.

**Griffin:**

[singing] There's no—there's no words.



**Rachel:**

Oh, okay.

**Griffin:**

Yeah, I thought it can be cool if it was just like you felt like you're in a hip like, like club and it was—

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:**

... like... [singing] [laughs]

**Rachel:**

[laughs] It's like a reflex. You can't—

**Griffin:**

I can't fight that off.

**Rachel:**

... can't help yourself.

**Griffin:**

Can you imagine what it's like to be Kelsey Grammer? And just like every time you hear any bass at all, you gotta be like a—[singing]

**Rachel:**

Or if a loved one is like, "Hey, baby," and he like... He just can't. He just comes right after that.

**Griffin:**

He cums?

**Rachel:**

No.

**Griffin:**

That's what you said.

**Rachel:**

I said it comes right after that.

**Griffin:**

You said he comes right after that. You said Kelsey Grammer has an orgasm every time anyone says the word, "Hey, baby." That's what you said. Run back the tapes.

**Rachel:**

That's the Glen Stevonnie song, it'd be really hard—

**Griffin:**

I had that exact same thought. I love you so much.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

You're my perfect soul mate from heaven.

**Rachel:**

Uh, the poem I am bringing is written by, uh, Jimmy Santiago Baca, who was born in 1952, in Santa Fe. Uh, he is a poet of Chicano and Apache descent. Um, he had kind of a tumultuous upbringing.

**Griffin:**

How so?

**Rachel:**

Uh, so he was abandoned by his parents when he was two.

**Griffin:**

Jesus Christ.

**Rachel:**

And then his grandmother brought him to an orphanage. And then at 13, he ran away. Uh, and then when he was like 20 or so he was convicted on drug charges, and spent the next five or so years in prison. Uh, and it was there that he learned to read because he was in the orphanage—

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

... and he didn't have access to any kind of education at the time. And so it was in prison that he learned to read and began writing.

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

Uh, and it became this really powerful tool for him. I was watching this interview with him where he talked about how it enabled him to connect with people. Uh, because he would meet people and write letters for them that the... to like send to their like families—

**Griffin:**

Oh, wow.

**Rachel:**

... and like love poems to like inmate's girlfriends, and, um, and he learned just a tremendous amount... There was actually a movie that came out—

**Griffin:**

I was gonna say this sounds like the plot of a movie.

**Rachel:**

Well, he ended up writing a screenplay for a movie that was released that was based on his experience in prison with the rival gangs and such. Uh, but the poem I wanted to read is, uh, called, "I Am Offering This Poem."

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

It's very nice.

**Griffin:**

I'm excited to hear it, I can use a nice poem.

**Rachel:**

I am offering this poem to you,  
since I have nothing else to give.  
Keep it like a warm coat  
when winter comes to cover you,  
or like a pair of thick socks

the cold cannot bite through,

I love you,

I have nothing else to give you,  
so it is a pot full of yellow corn  
to warm your belly in winter,  
it is a scarf for your head, to wear  
over your hair, to tie up around your face,

I love you,

Keep it, treasure this as you would  
if you were lost, needing direction,  
in the wilderness life becomes when mature;  
and in the corner of your drawer,  
tucked away like a cabin or hogan  
in dense trees, come knocking,  
and I will answer, give you directions,  
and let you warm yourself by this fire,  
rest by this fire, and make you feel safe

I love you,

It's all I have to give,  
and all anyone needs to live,  
and to go on living inside,  
when the world outside  
no longer cares if you live or die;  
remember,

I love you.

**Griffin:**

You had me at a, "Big pot of yellow corn, keep your belly..." I really had a hard time focusing on any of the other sort of imagery after that, because I thought about being cold. And I thought about somebody handing me like a witch's cauldron full of glistening yellow corn and eating all of it.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:**

And just going to bed for three months.

**Rachel:**

He's like a New Mexico poet and like a lot of the lines kind of remind you of that. There's something about a big pot of yellow corn—

**Griffin:**

For sure.

**Rachel:**

... that feels very New Mexico to me.

**Griffin:**

Um, that was great. That was very nice in a very... it was a, it was a self, uh—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... you're, you're right. Uh, uh, are a lot of his poems like, like that, like very sort of, I don't know, romantic, both in the like, literal sense and the like artistic sense?

**Rachel:**

Yeah, it well... I mean, there's that. And also, he's written a lot of kind of more activist focus poems, um, given his kind of own personal experience-

**Griffin:**

Yeah, sure.

**Rachel:**

... and, and kind of the inequity that he experienced. But it's, it's just that it's that man, that straightforward, just very precisely written stuff that I love—

**Griffin:**

You love that stuff.

**Rachel:**

... so much. I love it because there's such a tendency to go flowery, or grand, you know, when like, the, the very simple straightforward language is

just gonna be so powerful. And I just... I found this very nice. This poem is just, it's like, I don't know if you do this, but when things get really like miserable in the world, I always try and find like a quote, or somebody that said something that I can feel like, "Yeah, all right." That's, that'll bring me comfort.

**Griffin:**

Sure.

**Rachel:**

And lately, I haven't been as lucky with that. Uh, but poetry man, it's always there for you.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Kind of transports you a little bit to a place that is more simple and nice.

**Griffin:**

Yeah. Um, yeah, I think that's probably why I watched all nine hours of The Lord of the Rings movies, because I think it does that for me kind of in a way.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

It's, you know, seeing mice, seeing triumph I guess, of, of good. Anyway, can I steal you away?

**Rachel:**

I've, I've forgotten the actual song.

**Griffin:**

It can be like, um, "Heaven let your light shine down."

**Rachel:**

It's beautiful.

**Griffin:**

It's a good fucking track man.

[ad break]

**Rachel:**

I've got a jumbotron.

**Griffin:**

Hit me with that jumbotron stick.

**Rachel:**

Griffin, do you like fantasy?

**Griffin:**

Um, no. Yeah, it was kind of hate watch of a loather there. Um, no, of course I did. It's a wonderful world.

**Rachel:**

I'm going to tell you about Moonstone.

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

Go to [moonstone-comic.tumblr.com](http://moonstone-comic.tumblr.com) to start the journey. "As the suns are setting and the moon starts to rise—"

**Griffin:**

Are we back in the poetry corner?

**Rachel:**

"... you hear a playful drumbeat in the distance. The forest around you breeds life with animals and travelers moving through the trees. Welcome to Thinner, the home world of Moonstone. A new web comic about a group of explorers solving the mysteries of their world. Inspired by the author's love of D&D. Moonstone is a fantasy story that explores friendship, self love, and found family."

**Griffin:**

That sounds real good.

**Rachel:**

It does sound good.

**Griffin:**

It's moonstone-comic.tumblr.com and Tumblr doesn't have any "E" in it. It's... they're so tricky.

**Rachel:**

This next message is for Caitlyn. It is from Mackenzie. "You are such a wonderful sister and aunt to the babies. I'm so glad the marching band gods assigned you as my buddy and that you let me marry your brother. I hope you are loving your new job. But if not, you have the McElroys to get you through. I can't wait for a visit to watch some HP and begin indoctrinating Maggy into the Phantom. Miss and love you."

**Griffin:**

That is such a good story. "We were marching band buddies together and then I married your bro." That's like... there's so many good movie ideas in this episode.

**Rachel:**

I know.

**Griffin:**

Damn, that's good stuff.

**Rachel:**

It's very good.

[Maximum Fun ad]

**Griffin:**

Can I tell you about my second thing?

**Rachel:**

Yes.

**Griffin:**

[singing] I mean, I do that and you're probably wondering, am I gonna talk—

**Rachel:**

Yeah, which is it?



**Griffin:**

... am I gonna talk about Under Pressure, am I gonna talk about Ice Ice Baby? Do not worry. I'm going to talk about Under Pressure. Under Pressure—

**Rachel:**

Oh, my... let's, lets—

**Griffin:**

No no, no, no, no.

**Rachel:**

Okay.

**Griffin:**

Under Pressure is like one of my favorite songs of all time. I think it's like a fucking triumph. I think it is a great... It used to be whenever I would, um, like go to, you know, go out to bars for any reason ever. Uh, and I had a jukebox like Under Pressure was for sure gonna be, gonna be played on there.

**Rachel:**

I've seen you do it for karaoke a few times.

**Griffin:**

Yeah, yeah, yeah. It makes it good duo—a duet for karaoke.

**Rachel:**

Incredible.

**Griffin:**

Uh, I just think it's like, I don't know. It's a beautiful, it, it's... it was by Queen and David Bowie. You've almost certainly heard it, and you're gonna hear it again here in a little bit. It was off Queen, the 1982 album, "Hot Space." Uh, a it was a hugely successful song both for Queen and David Bowie. Although it was never actually on a David Bowie album, it was just on Queen... I guess he was just like, "No, you take this one. That's fine." Um, and I don't know. I think it's like, uh, just a very, like, relatable, very, like human song, which I do not think it was like Queen and David Bowie's like, uh, like a, uh, an area that they explored very often. Like, all of their songs were larger, larger than life until these like, wild stories. And this—

**Rachel:**

Oh yeah. David Bowie was like, by all accounts, a space alien.

**Griffin:**

Yeah, sure. Um, and this is like, this is like a moral rock song about like, the ubiquitous hardships that humanity faces.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Um, and I, I, I don't know, I think it's, I think it's just beautiful and it also has, you know, the most famous baseline ever that Vanilla Ice stole. Um, in a 1990 interview Vanilla Ice said he did not steal the hook, that he actually added an extra note in there.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, have you seen him like perform that in interviews?

**Griffin:**

No. Well, recently, well, not recently, but later he admitted he just sampled it. And then he settled out of court with Queen and David Bowie, and said he was joking when he said the other thing about how he mixed it up. Anyway, okay, I'm just going to play Under Pressure here.

[Under Pressure by Queen and David Bowie plays]

**Griffin:**

This song has a super interesting history. I love this song but I didn't know like how it was made. And I did while I was researching this topic. Uh, this song actually started life as an unreleased Queen song called "Feel Like." Uh, which was written by their drummer Roger Taylor. And it was very, very much a Queen ass song.

Like, it was just about scorned love basically. And it never saw the light of day because they weren't happy with it. With, with how it was, uh, coming out in sounding. There are like bootleg like demos of, of this song that exists. It's like the only footprint of this song that exists today. I'm gonna play a little bit of it. The quality is super bad, but you can get a feel for like, "Oh, this is Under Pressure."

[music plays]

**Griffin:**

It has like a lot of the bones of Under Pressure basically, but it doesn't have like the grandiose lyrics and it doesn't have David Bowie, and it doesn't have that bass line. Uh, and so it became like Under Pressure, became what it is because of David Bowie's involvement. Uh, originally, Bowie was going to sing on a Queen track called, "Cool Cat." Um, but they removed his vocals at his request because he wasn't happy with his performance on the song. There's a lot of like perfectionist stuff in the—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... history of Under Pressure. Um, but while he was in the studio, they had the studio in Switzerland while he was there. Uh, David Bowie and the four members of Queen, uh, including Freddie Mercury, just got together and just wrote Under Pressure in, uh, what Bowie claims was, "An evening flat." They just cranked it, cranked it out. And it did take like a lot of this stuff from, from Feel Like, like the, the sort of, uh, rhythm of it, uh, came, came directly from that song, but obviously, there's a lot of stuff, uh, that was added to it. The scat singing that happens throughout, like the—[scats]

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... uh, that was because it was improvised when they... like it was—

**Rachel:**

Oh, my God.

**Griffin:**

... of the improvisation of the writing. Um—

**Rachel:**

I love that.

**Griffin:**

... it's extremely good. Uh, what is great is that there are so many things that are uncertain about who actually did what. Uh, Bowie attributes Freddie

Mercury with like a lot of the like, uh, writing of the song while various members of Queen have said that Bowie wrote, you know, the lyrics, uh, and is responsible for, for the, uh, I don't know, the success of, of those lyrics. Uh, the bass line is the biggest mystery of all, I'm going to read you like an entire, like paragraph breakdown that I found on Wikipedia that breaks down the history of who made the, the most famous baseline in the history of rock music ever.

Uh, so, uh, John Deacon, who is the bassist, uh, said in a Japanese, uh, Music Life in 1982, that David Bowie created the bass line. Uh, in more recent interviews, Brian May and Roger Taylor credited the bass riff to Deacon, who was the bassist. Bowie on his website said that the bass line was already written before he became involved. Roger Taylor in an interview for the BBC documentary Queen, the Days Of Our Lives, stated that Deacon did indeed create the bass line, stating that all through the sessions in the studio he had been playing the riff over and over.

He also claims that when the band returned from dinner, Deacon amusingly forgot the riff, but fortunately, Taylor was still able to remember it. Brian May clarified matters in the 2016 Mirror online article, writing that... this is wild. It was actually Bowie, not Taylor, who had inadvertently changed the riff. The riff began as quote, "Deaky began playing six notes the same then one note of fourth down after the dinner break, Bowie corrected, actually changed Deacon's memory of the riff to..." [singing]

**Rachel:**

I love that song.

**Griffin:**

Everyone got a fucking hand on that ball. Everyone—

**Rachel:**

And I also love how generous everybody is where they're like, "No, no, no—"

**Griffin:**

"I didn't write the most famous bass riff in rock music. No, that wasn't me." It's... so basically the basis for the band like had the riff, but I guess the riff was just like... [singing] And then they went to dinner, and then they came back and he's like, "Oh, fuck, what was it?" And I was like, how much cocaine were you guys on it that you couldn't remember... [singing] And Bowie was like, "No, it's a... [singing]" And that was it, like that was—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... anyway, I fucking love it.

**Rachel:**

It's beautiful.

**Griffin:**

Uh, anyway, I love this whole song. Uh, every time you hear it come on, I just get inspired man. Like—

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:**

... it's so like soaring and like gospel like, uh, in a way that I have just always really, really, uh, really loved and I do, I do feel—

**Rachel:**

It feels like it goes places you don't expect it to go. Like every time I listened to it there's like something I forget that like—

**Griffin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Rachel:**

... shows up and I'm like, "Oh my gosh, I forgot that, that was part of the song."

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

It's like, there's such a journey in that. And then—

**Griffin:**

Yeah, you have like, a quiet break in the middle where it's—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... turned away. Yeah, that, that they always forget that, that's there. Anyway, it's such a good song. And I know like, I always feel weird talking about like, well, obviously Griffin, but like, I don't know. I feel like, I feel like there are also songs that are classics, and masterpieces that if I go a month without hearing them, I will completely forget that they exist.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, that's very true.

**Griffin:**

And I don't think that Under Pressure is one of those for me, but I imagine that it is for a lot of people. What is your second thing?

**Rachel:**

My second thing is also music related.

**Griffin:**

Oh boy.

**Rachel:**

It's when Rowlf plays the piano.

**Griffin:**

Rowlf is, um—

**Rachel:**

The Muppet.

**Griffin:**

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Uh—

**Rachel:**

The dog Muppet.

**Griffin:**

The dog Muppet. Rachel, and my... I think both our favorite Muppet?

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:**

That's how I knew. It was a good Muppet, man.

**Rachel:**

Um, I realized that I should talk about this when I got excited about the idea of researching this—

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

... for a little while. Um, I got to learn a little bit about how it works. How he plays the piano.

**Griffin:**

Wait, wait, wait, does he actually play note—the correct notes on the piano?

**Rachel:**

Well, lean in, Griffin.

**Griffin:**

Oh, shit. Yes.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Uh, so Rowlf is a... and I'm gonna say it that way.

**Griffin:**

Rowlf?

**Rachel:**

Rowlf, although there's been some like various pronunciations. Uh, but Rowlf is a live hand puppet which means that there is an actual hand up on one side, and then a hand in the mouth. And then—

**Griffin:**

Right.

**Rachel:**

... another person who does the other hand.

**Griffin:**

Oh, interesting, I always thought it was—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... one person does the head and two people do—

**Rachel:**

No.

**Griffin:**

... now hands, although physically, I don't know how you would do that. You would have to put your head through the other one's torso. It's just it's not the up thing you can do.

**Rachel:**

Uh, so Jim Henson would usually perform the head and the voice and the left hand and then another Muppeteer would perform in the right hand. However one, Rowlf played the piano, hence, it would hum the head and the second performer would control both hands on the keys.

**Griffin:**

Oh, okay, so that is how that worked. Just for this specific example.

**Rachel:**

Just for specific... the piano purposes. Uh, so Derrick Scott, who was the musical consultant for the Muppet Show, uh, would supply the prerecorded piano playing. And then, uh, the other puppeteer Steve Whitmire, would, uh, spend hours learning every nuance of the prerecorded piano track to make it look believable.

**Griffin:**

That is so much more work than you probably had to do, my God. My literal God.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] So the, so the piano itself didn't actually produce any music. But he would intentionally move his hands on the keys, so that it would match up with the—

**Griffin:**



Sure.

**Rachel:**

... recorded track. Um and that was, you know, that's what made the illusion like so effective. And so I... Rowlf like, and I actually was hoping you would play a clip.

**Griffin:**

Oh, yeah. What do you want me to play?

**Rachel:**

Uh, the song, "I Hope That Somethin' Better Comes Along" from the Muppet Movie.

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

Do you know the, the clip I'm talking about?

**Griffin:**

The new Muppet Movie?

**Rachel:**

No, this is 1979.

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

This is when Steve Martin is in there.

**Griffin:**

Oh, yes.

**Rachel:**

When Kermit goes into the restaurant, and Rowlf is like, uh, kind of like Tom Waits, like musician at the piano. Um, and they're talking about like, lost love. And—

**Griffin:**

Okay, and probably find a clip of that somewhere. Okay.

**Rachel:**

It's on YouTube.

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

It's on YouTube.

**Griffin:**

If it's in YouTube, then it's in the show.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm. Uh, and so Rowlf and Kermit are kind of taking turns singing the song and at the very end. Steve Martin is the waiter and he's just at the end of the clip.

[Muppet music plays]

**Rachel:**

I, at first I was just gonna say Rowlf. You know, I was just gonna say like—

**Griffin:**

He's a good dude.

**Rachel:**

He's a wonderful Muppet. I love him. He's funny. He's adorable.

**Griffin:**

He's talented.

**Rachel:**

He's got that gravelly blues voice and then I realized, "No you know what, what it really is, is when he plays the piano." Like I, I just get transported. It's just like a nice like I don't know, it's, it's another layer of artistry and complexity to the character.

**Griffin:**

Sure.

**Rachel:**

He can like play the piano and also the banjo if you watch some clips.

**Griffin:**

It's a mature... Wait, does he really play the banjo?

**Rachel:**

Yeah, there's—

**Griffin:**

I thought that was Kermit's thing.

**Rachel:**

Yes.

**Griffin:**

They have to banjo playing Muppets?

**Rachel:**

On The Muppet Show, he, he also played the banjo.

**Griffin:**

Seems excessive to me. No, Rowlf is a, you know, a mature, uh, pick for a favorite Muppet. When you're young, it's—

**Rachel:**

He's not, he's—

**Griffin:**

... when you're young, it's Gonzo and you're like, "I love Gonzo and his antics."

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

But, you know, Gonzo makes me—

**Rachel:**

And Fozzie.

**Griffin:**

... so tired now. Oh, Fozzie.

**Rachel:**

Fozzie and Gonzo are always like, jacking and for the spotlight.

**Griffin:**

I've had a long day. And I'm tired. Can we not do this right now, Fozzie?

**Rachel:**

And-

**Griffin:**

I take it back, actually love Fozzie.

**Rachel:**

I do love Fozzie.

**Griffin:**

Gonzo can—

**Rachel:**

I do love Fozzie. There's actually another on YouTube. There's another great piano duet of Fozzie and Rowlf, uh, playing together and it's very good. Um, but anyway, uh, yeah, I always get a little like sheepish talking about the Muppets because it's like very juvenile and it's, and it feels very like escapist sometimes to like, just drown yourself in Muppets. But Rowlf, I just... he is, he's a mat—just a mature person's Muppet.

**Griffin:**

Got me thinking about Muppets now.

**Rachel:**

I know. I decided to just focus on one Muppet in case I want to go back to the well later.

**Griffin:**

Yeah. Next week. I'm doing Statler and then the week after that, I'm going to do Waldorf. I'm breaking them up, because they're different. They do have certain different—

**Rachel:**

They do.

**Griffin:**

... vibes.

**Rachel:**

They're very different.

**Griffin:**

Yeah. Um, well, I guess that's it huh, for this one?

**Rachel:**

It is.

**Griffin:**

So, uh, I guess we'll be back next week and we'll have, um, who knows what new sort of body mods we would have done. I might get my, uh, you know, my ears gauged or something. Um, maybe I'll get a third nostril added in. It's going to be wild folks.

**Rachel:**

But it won't be where you expect it.

**Griffin:**

No, no, it won't be. So thank you to Maximum Fun for having us. You go to [maximumfun.org](http://maximumfun.org), check out all the great shows there like, uh, uh, the Beef and Dairy Network, and Friendly Fire, and, uh—

**Rachel:**

International Waters.

**Griffin:**

International Waters, Switchblade Sisters, Can I Pet Your Dog? Uh, all at [maximumfun.org](http://maximumfun.org). Um, we got other shows at [mcelroyshows.com](http://mcelroyshows.com). Oh, The Sawbones Book. Hey, go buy The Sawbones Book.

**Rachel:**

It's out.

**Griffin:**

It's out, it's so good. I've had it for, uh, for like a month or so now and I adore it and, uh, I... you will too. It is out, uh, at the time of recording this it is out today. Uh, and you can find it at [bit.li/sawbonesbook](http://bit.li/sawbonesbook). You can find it

there and get, get it, get it ordered and on the way. Uh, thank you to Bo En and Augustus for the use of our theme song, Money Won't Pay. You can find a link to that in the episode description and, um, anything else, huh?

**Rachel:**

Uh, thank you to all those people in the Wonderful Facebook group. I find myself just going into that group anytime I, I want to seek out some cute videos or some nice little uppers.

**Griffin:**

It is a—yes, where Rachel buys all of our, buys all our truckers speed is on the Wonderful Facebook—

**Rachel:**

If you're looking for it, it's actually still under old show title, so it's under Rose Buddies Cast, but the content is exclusively Wonderful focused.

**Griffin:**

Exclusively Wonderful focused and also a peer to peer dark web drug trading. Oh no, it's the FBI we gotta go bye!

[theme music plays]

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