

Wonderful! 283: Vaping the Beef

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[Intro, theme music plays]

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hello, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is *Wonderful!*

Griffin: Back in the saddle, back in the cockpit... of the jet we call *Wonderful!* A show where we talk about things we like that's good we're into. Sorry about last week. That was my bad.

Rachel: I mean, we put up an episode.

Griffin: Yeah, but it wasn't... It was, you know, the people who were at that live show in Raleigh, beautiful Raleigh, North Carolina, they already got it, you know?

Rachel: Yeah, that's true.

Griffin: And I wanna make sure that we're serving the whole crowd. I don't want to leave any city out in the cold.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Like our poor friends in Raleigh who had to hear the same thing two weeks in a row.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But I literally couldn't speak, which was a new experience for me.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Very raspy.

Rachel: Yeah. Griffin... Griffin usually gets like, an achiness, when he's sick. But his voice, maybe one day is kind of rough.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But this time...

Griffin: I did a lot of recording myself singing different songs. Um...

Rachel: Oh you did?

Griffin: Yeah, I did one of "Wheels on the Bus" while I was singing it to Gus.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And it was like a low, haunting, just sort of like monastic sort of chant.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It was... I was literally sending people voice messages on my phone of me singing different songs just because it was... It was an unbelievable register that I did not know my—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: ... vocal cords, when sort of afflicted in the way that they were, could produce.

Rachel: It was kinda fun for you, I think.

Griffin: [sarcastic] It was really fun. I miss it. I actually wish I had not gotten healthy. Um...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It impact—I didn't record fuck all last week.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Because I couldn't, you know, speak for long periods of time.

Rachel: You got so much swearing built up.

Griffin: I do. I do. Well, I wrote a lot of swears down.

Rachel: Okay. [laughs]

Griffin: Do you have any Small Wonders?

Rachel: Um... *Bear* Season Two.

Griffin: *Bear* Season Two.

Rachel: Real... Real sexy food in this one.

Griffin: Holy shit, yeah, they're going really hard on the sexy food in this one.

Rachel: Griffin and I made a shared decision to reduce our snacking in the evening at the same time we made a decision to watch a season of *Top Chef* and *The Bear*... [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Which has been challenging.

Griffin: But I mean... Okay, but the... You know, we're not... We're not having snacks of Shiso Gelée, right?

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: It's like... So when I see somebody making a delicious Shiso Gelée—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I don't think like, "Boy howdy, that, you know, old box of Sour Patch Kids that we have in the pantry is really calling my name."

Rachel: I know.

Griffin: That's not true. It is always calling my name.

Rachel: That's very true.

Griffin: But yeah. Oh yeah, it's good. It's good. It's got big... Even more than the first season, just like Chicago... It's Chicago porn in the way that it is also food porn.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Just a lot... A lot of beautiful B-roll.

Rachel: Now we're only about halfway through the season.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: So it's, as I always like to say, it's possible there's a dive here and we don't know about it yet.

Griffin: I doubt it. I trust this show.

Rachel: Maybe there's some murders. We don't know.

Griffin: Okay, I guess so.

Rachel: I'm just saying.

Griffin: That would be a wild twist.

Rachel: That would, that would. And people would maybe leave the season thinking like, "Well, I watch for the cooking."

Griffin: Yeah. And then all these murders came in.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Did we talk about *Siren*? I think so. I think we might... I think we might have talked about *Siren*.

Rachel: Probably.

Griffin: We finished it.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That show beats ass. I got... I evangelized really fiercely on *Besties* this morning.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: So it like, got me all fired up to talk about *Siren* again.

Rachel: Were none of the other guys watching it?

Griffin: I mean, Justin had watched it, but Russ and Plante had not heard of it.

Rachel: Oh...

Griffin: Brief reminder, it's battle royale capture the flag with six teams of different professions—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And different... Just four women in each team, just like fuckin' battling it out. It is some of the best-made reality television I think I've maybe ever seen?

From a like... just a plotting standpoint.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And a cinematography standpoint. It is a staggering achievement.

Rachel: I can't even imagine how many camera crew members they had.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Just thinking about the terrain and the number of times that people would split off.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Crazy.

Griffin: So many amazing shots. I don't remember reality television shows for their like... for the cinematography. But there are so many things.

I remember there's one shot in one episode that just shows this whole team walking leisurely down a hill, going to the market to buy something.

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah.

Griffin: And then they walk off frame, off the right side of the screen. And then boom, this air raid siren goes off that marks the start of the battle.

And then just like, there's a beat where there's nothing, and then all of them just go fucking booking right back up the hill in the same shot.

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah.

Griffin: It is so good. It's so good. I've... Yeah. I've never been sadder to be finished with a reality show than I was with that one. But, man.

Rachel: Gotta assume that one's coming back.

Griffin: I pray to god. I feel like they hit something—

Rachel: They end it with this kind of like...

Griffin: [laughs] Hilarious cliffhanger.

Rachel: I don't know if it's really a cliffhanger, or if it was just kind of a fun way for the audience to end the show.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But they end it as kind of like a, "Did they win?" Question mark?

Griffin: Yeah. It's... Y'all... Watch this fuckin' show. I cannot... It gets... It gets the *Wonderful!* seal of approval—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: ... as hard as we can stamp that down on something.

Rachel: Oh, by the way, wonderful.fyi has been updated.

Griffin: I saw that!

Rachel: I don't know if you noticed that.

Griffin: Thank you so much. I don't know who is running that, but it really is an invaluable resource for us. So, thank you.

Rachel: Yeah, we had kind of gotten used to it not being where we were and now it is and it's tremendous.

Griffin: Thank you so much.

Rachel: Thank you, whoever does that.

Griffin: You go first this week, we've arbitrarily decided. Whaddaya got?

Rachel: Okay so, my Wonderful Thing this week, originally I had told you I was going to take a leftover from the Raleigh show.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: But I decided against it. To talk about something a little bit science-y—

Griffin: [gasps]

Rachel: ... which is when food gets brown.

Griffin: When food gets brown, you like this.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: When it—okay, but from our friend Heat or from our friend Decay?

Rachel: Heat.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: You know, I thought maybe you were talking like when an apple gets brown. I don't like that.

Rachel: Yeah. No, I'm so goth. [laughs]

Griffin: You like it when the food gets hot and turns brown?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: That's awesome.

Rachel: Yes. I was thinking about this, 'cause this is a skill I feel like you really have.

Griffin: I like to make the food get brown from heat. Yeah, for sure.

Rachel: I'm very tentative when I'm, especially when I'm on the stovetop, and also when I'm in the oven.

I tend to get impatient or I worry that I'm going to go too hard.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: So my temperatures are too low or I stop cooking too early.

Griffin: Right. But you, man—

Griffin: I have learned—

Rachel: I'm really impressed with your brownness.

Griffin: I genuinely feel like it was when, in the peak of when we were like— and by “we” I mean the country was—like swept up in *Bon Appétit* fever.

And there was that one dude that always described cooking things in a pan that he called, “rippin’ hot.”

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: That really sort of like pushed through the idea in my head that, like, “That pan needs to be really fuckin’ hot before you put meat in it.”

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And since then, like, it's... It really changed the game for me.

Rachel: No, it's true. And I found out there is a science-y way of talking about this, which is the Maillard reaction.

Griffin: The Maillard? My-yard?

Rachel: Yes. I mean it's... It's French, so it's M-A-I-L-L-A-R-D.

Griffin: [bad French accent] Maillard.

Rachel: There you go. [laughs]

Griffin: [worse French accent] Maillard.

Rachel: [better French accent] Magnifique.

Griffin: Thank you!

Rachel: [laughs] So well, first I went to *America's Test Kitchen* to find out why it tastes better when the food is brown.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And so there are proteins in our tastebud that are temperature sensitive.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: So the tastebuds just perform better at warm temperatures.

So if food is cooked to 59 degrees and below, these taste buds, like the channels in them barely open.

When it is heated to 98.5 degrees or hotter, these channels open and the sensitivity increases more than a hundred times.

Griffin: Counterpoint. Ice keam [sic]. Very cold, but I taste it really good. Like really strong.

Rachel: Here's *America's Test Kitchen* recommendation, is that if you're going to serve a dish chilled, make sure that it is aggressively seasoned. So you know ice cream's super sweet, lot of flavor there.

Griffin: Okay...

Rachel: So I think it makes up for the lack of heat.

Griffin: That's interesting. So I need to turn it up, like when I'm making my cold gazpacho, I should spice it up even a little bit more.

Rachel: Exactly.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Gazpacho is the exact example that *America's Test Kitchen* gives.

Griffin: Well, there's not a lot of cold dinners—

Rachel: Yeah. that's true.

Griffin: That are... That people talk about. Gazpacho's kinda the main game in town.

Rachel: The other thing, and this is where Maillard comes in, is that when food is cooked, it is easier to inhale what they call "microscopic molecules" that are diffused from food.

So the hotter the food, the more energetic these molecules are, and the more they are likely to travel into our nose.

Griffin: Okay. that makes sense. So I'm kind... It's kind of like I'm vaping the beef?

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Vaping the pork in the pan.

Rachel: [laughing] Uh-huh.

Griffin: That's cool.

Rachel: You know, before vapes, we did... I mean, we did still take in smell.

Griffin: Sure, sure but we have—

Rachel: And steam and...

Griffin: We have more language for it now.

Rachel: [laughs] Like “vape?”

Griffin: The vocabulary has changed and improved, I would say.

Rachel: [laughing] Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

Griffin: We can be more specific in what we say—

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: ... when we talk about food, because of things like “vape.”

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And all the language that comes with it, which is pretty much exclusively...

Griffin: Rip, cotton, vape...

Rachel: Yeah. [laughs]

Griffin: Is there a high concept restaurant that has done like a vape menu? Like you know how there's like, you know the—

Rachel: Oh, they put the little cloche over it and like a—

Griffin: Put the cloche and then like—

Rachel: ... flavor steam?

Griffin: Obviously we have smoke and steam and like all that.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: We've like really figured out—But I'm talking about like, you know, you pull it up and there's just like a little, you know, pin there and then you're like “What the fuck is this?”

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And then they can be like, “It's, you know, eggs Florentine” or whatever.

Rachel: Whoa!

Griffin: And you're like, “I don't... Whoa! Yeah.”

Rachel: I mean, there are probably restaurants that do something like that. I don't know if they'd put an actual vape pen on a tray but... [laughs]

Griffin: Okay. I bet that exists. I bet you... I bet you I'm not joking right now.

Rachel: [skeptically] Uh-huh.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Okay. So the Maillard reaction is named after a French chemist who talks about, you know, when food turns brown. [laughs]

There is a chemical reaction that takes place. The sugars and amino acids in the food react with the heat and produce complex molecules. And these molecules are responsible for aromas and flavors.

You do have to be careful with this, because if you go too far, another reaction occurs called pyrolysis, P-Y-R-O... pyrolysis.

Griffin: Pyrolysis. Okay.

Rachel: Which is when it turns black.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: And gets bitter.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: So there's Maillard, what I was just talking about. There is another chemist in 1953 named John Hodge who worked at the US Department—

Griffin: Man.

Rachel: ... [laughs] of Agriculture. No just Hodge.

Griffin: I bet he had a mustache.

Rachel: It's possible. So he kind of understood the like distinct periods within the Maillard reaction to kind of really make your cooking very precise.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: So that first there is a group of sugar that reacts with an amino group to produce water and unstable glycosylamine.

Griffin: Oh, wow!

Rachel: Which makes sense. You notice a lot of times when you cook something, there's like moisture that comes out of it, you know?

Griffin: Yeah, that's another trick to get that food real brown is you gotta dry it out a little bit before you toss it down on the pan.

Rachel: This glycosylamine produces a series of other compounds. And then the last is a group of molecules that include the flavor, aroma, color.

Griffin: Great.

Rachel: So this is, to your expertise, I'm saying like a lot of times I don't get to that last stage.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I'm just like, "Ooh! It looks like it might cook!" And then I stop.

Griffin: I push it to the limit, yeah.

Rachel: Yeah, no, it's true.

Griffin: Yeah, it's a... You know, I'm a risk taker.

Rachel: Uh-huh. [laughs]

Griffin: I don't think I've ever burned meat before. I can't remember a time where I have burned meat. I have... I have—

Rachel: I don't—

Griffin: ... dramatically undercooked—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Like I have produced a lot of gray meals, but I have not produced a lot of just like charred, blackened sort of briquettes.

Rachel: Yeah, no, I will say that you set off the smoke alarm quite a bit.

Griffin: We have a... We have a fuckin' feisty smoke alarm, though.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I took some French fries out of the toaster, like a toaster oven, that set off the smoke alarm. They were not burning. They were not... They were just sort of steam—They were giving off their potato steam, their potato vape, and that was enough to, like, set it off, so...

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah, yeah. I mean, usually I will say what it is is you get that pan real hot.

Griffin: Hell yeah I do.

Rachel: And then you drop something in and then—

Griffin: Yeah I do.

Rachel: [explosion noise]

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: You know. And that's...

Griffin: I love it. That's how you know you're fucking cooking, bay-bee!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I love that.

Rachel: There are workarounds which I didn't realize. And this, again, I think is from... Or no, this was a video I watched about that reaction.

That you can add baking soda to onions, for example, which increases the pH and will make them brown faster.

Griffin: That's interesting.

Rachel: So there's like—

Griffin: I have a real problem getting onions to brown.

Rachel: I know.

Griffin: I'm not good at caramelizing onions.

Rachel: I know. Well, this isn't even caramelizing. This is just browning.

Griffin: Okay. I mean...

Rachel: I'm just... I want to be clear.

Griffin: Okay. But it's the same. For—That's the same thing, right? Is there a difference between browning onions and caramelizing?

Rachel: Well, caramelizing is when there's like, sugars involved.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: You know?

Griffin: Yeah, I guess. Okay.

Rachel: I will say... So the little video I watched about this reaction said that it typically happens between 230 and 340 degrees.

Griffin: That's a huge range.

Rachel: I know. [laughs]

Griffin: Like, that's wild.

Rachel: I think it's like how long you stay at that temperature.

Griffin: Okay. That makes sense. From my brief foray into cand—into hard candy making—I was always sort of dazzled by the spec—Like, hyper-specific—

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Like if you want it at hardball, it's gotta be like exactly 145 or whatever, probably much, much higher than that.

And if you get it up to 147, you fucking destroyed it and the pan.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And the oven on which it was cooked and the spoon that was in there. That's done.

Rachel: It is... It is easy when cooking to kind of forget the science behind it. Like particularly if you get in the habit of making substitutions.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I have started trying to infuse more bran into our children. And I have just been adding bran willy-nilly to various types of muffins.

And these muffins are not rising particularly well anymore.

Griffin: No.

Rachel: Because the whole texture and the science is off, so...

Griffin: But I like it. I like a...

Rachel: You like a dense...

Griffin: I like a dense—

Rachel: ... moist muffin? [laughs]

Griffin: Whenever I watch *Bake Off* and they are like, "This is stodgy." I al—
In my head, I always go, "That's good."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Like, I kind of like it to be sort of thick and stick—you know, Sticky.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. [laughs] We should stop.

Griffin: We should stop, shouldn't we? Can we steal you away?

Rachel: [laughing] Yes.

[ad break, *Home Improvement* theme plays]

Griffin: For my topic, I want to talk about yesterday, we went to a Fourth of July block party in our neighborhood...

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Where we only knew like, a couple of people.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I am never particularly confident in those kinds of situations and this situation was no different.

Rachel: We did have children, which is helpful sometimes I think, because you can be like, "Hey, look at that kid doing that thing." Like, you have a shared—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: ... investment in a young person.

Griffin: Absolutely, that definitely helps. But what helps more is when I saw a bunch of wooden blocks and sticks getting busted out. Kubb.

Rachel: Yeah, I was so excited for you because I saw these people reading the instructions and I was like, "Oh..."

Griffin: Oh, you sweet summer children.

Rachel: "They could use some help."

Griffin: Yes. So kubb, I believe I have talked about on the show before in a segment that I did about bowling because you know there is definitely a...

There is a similarity there in the games that bowling has kind of inspired and been inspired by. Like skittles, different sort of lawn-based experiences. I think kubb is probably my all-time favorite yard game or maybe tied with croquet, which I know I've also talked about on the show before. Both of which we used to play with our buddies back in Austin, before, you know, we had kids.

But I saw people playing, getting ready to play kubb, at this block party and I was like "Hell yes. I'm in." This is a great social game. Couldn't be easier to just walk up, pick up a stick and start throwing it at other pieces of wood.

Rachel: [laughing] Uh-huh.

Griffin: So the basic rules of kubb, and again, I apologize if I'm restating some of this stuff from when I did a whole thing on bowling, but you mark out a big rectangular playing field.

It's five meters wide by eight meters long. I have no idea...

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: ... how long that is, in sort of my own sort of spatial journey.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. This is like when we play croquet and it's like there's a very specific process for placing the wickets. I never really know.

Griffin: No, we just kind of freestyle it 'cause it's all... You know, it's all... It's still croquet.

So on this big rectangular field, on the far sides, you have two teams, each one places their five "kubbs." Kubbs, which are these sort of thick rectangular wooden blocks.

And those are the targets that the other team is trying to knock down with the batons that they throw. Well, wooden dowel rods basically, that you toss down the field trying to knock down these bigger blocks on the far side.

So each round a team throws their six batons toward the other team's kubbs trying to knock them all down.

And the point of the game is once you've knocked down all five of the other team's sort of back line of kubbs, you try to knock over the kingpin, which is a much bigger sort of wooden block that is right at the very center of the field.

And it works sort of like 8-ball rules in pool, where if you knock down the king before you have taken out all the other kubbs—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: ... you instantly lose, which did happen yesterday. Fortunately not to me. I was not the one who ran afoul of that.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I didn't know that many people there, and that would have been a very humiliating experience for me.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Fortunately, I was not the one who made a big stink there.

Rachel: I heard a lot of like, loud shouts. Is that... Was... Was it related to that?

Griffin: That was probably related to the great... the grand failure that took place on my team.

So where the game gets really interesting is between each round a team has to pick up their toppled kubbs and throw them onto the opponents' side of the field.

And from that point they stand up and then those are called field kubbs. And you have to knock those down before you can go after the back line.

Rachel: Yeah...

Griffin: So, if you fail to do that, if you leave any of the field kubbs out, and then it's the other team's turn, they get to throw from the closest field kubb.

So all of a sudden like they get this huge advantage because they're not having to throw from the very back of the field. They could throw from, you know, right behind the king, potentially, and have just like a really sweet spot.

So the games have this like, momentum. That is, they have this push and pull to them that... It really sort of defines the game, in my opinion. Like it makes it... Gives it the feel that it has.

And gives it the either sort of steamroll, powerhouse effect—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: ... that you feel if you're like crushing it. Or incredible come-from-behind victories.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: If you manage to, you know, completely clean out the field.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And completely demolish your opponents' advantage and then start clawing your way back.

There's also like different tactics in how you set up the field kubbs. Like maybe you wanna throw them really, really close to the front line so that they're easier for you to knock over when you're targeting them.

But taking a bigger risk because if you don't knock them over all of a sudden your opponent is going to be able to throw from much, much, much closer up.

Rachel: Mm.

Griffin: There's also fun stuff, I think this may be a house rule that I've always played with, but whenever you're throwing one of your toppled kubbs over to turn it into a field kubb, if you knock over another field kubb, you stack them up.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: So you just kind of want to try and group them up so you can try and knock over or maybe even a few of the field kubbs with a single toss of one of your batons.

That's like, it. That's like pretty much all the rules that there are in the game.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: It's maybe a little bit hard to sort of spatially imagine this, but it is the type of game where you play it for—When you play one round and you get it.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Like it completely makes sense like, what it is that you are doing in this game. It feels great.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It feels really, really good. The batons have like a really nice weight to them and when you can like really just snipe something from really, really far away, it makes it really satisfying wooden clonk sound—

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: ... that hits just so right every time.

Rachel: I'm smiling because I'm thinking about when we were leaving, Gus just ran up and picked one up and threw it.

Griffin: And threw it to the ground and all the adults like, cheered like, "Hell yeah!"

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It is... It's really easy to set up. It's really easy to understand. It's easy to play. It's just a treat of a game, especially in like a big group social setting like the block party we went to.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: 'Cause you can really play with as many people as you want, right? Like you could play with six people on a team, each person throwing one baton or, you know, you could just pass the batons around.

Like it is so loosey-goosey it really... Really you can play it however you want to play it.

Rachel: Yeah, and it's a good like, chitchat game, you know?

Griffin: Yeah, it's a great chitchat game. Great drinking game because you only need the one hand to toss the—

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah.

Griffin: ... toss the batons. It's... It's great. So there are a lot of forebears to kubb throughout history.

It has its origins mostly in Sweden and Gotland, which is an island off of Sweden's coast in the Baltic Sea. And it was in Gotland that in 1931 there was an etymologist who noted the first use of the name "kubb" for the game, but there have been games throughout history, like dating back to the 16th century, of people you know throwing wooden balls at pins in a big, big field.

Rachel: Can you spell how...?

Griffin: K-U-B-B.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Is how you spell "kubb." For the past like decade or so, it's started to become much more popular in North America.

There's a city in Wisconsin called Eau Claire that has hosted the National Kubb Championship since 2007 and named itself the [laughing] American Capital for Kubb in 2013—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: ... I believe. There are different kubb leagues that have popped up. There's seven major kubb leagues, mostly centered around the Midwest, like Wisconsin and Minnesota have their own sort of kubb leagues.

And I don't know, I feel like I went from not hearing anything about this game, not knowing anything about this game. Playing it for the first time in Austin, you know, maybe six or so years ago.

And now a lot of people, I feel like know about kubb. Partially because like big, you know, outdoor hangs became a bit more common in the times of COVID.

Rachel: Yeah, that's a good point.

Griffin: And the fact that like kubb sets are pretty inexpensive compared to like... You know, you buy a nice cornhole board and the thing, it's... you know, the bag. That's costs... How much is a cornhole? Five hundred, six hundred dollars?

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: But this, kubb is just some wooden blocks, right?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Like it is not that—The barrier of entry is pretty low and you can play it more or less anywhere.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah. That's kubb. I really like this game a whole bunch and it still feels like a thing that not everybody knows about and is like... It is...

I'm mostly bringing this because it surprised me how excited I got when I saw some people busting out the kubb set.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: 'Cause I haven't played in a couple of years and I was very, very rusty.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I didn't do like an incredible job. But I still just... Like seeing this game got me so stoked and made me realize just how badly I missed sort of playing it with a group of buddies.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: With some, you know, some brewskis on the side.

Rachel: Yeah. I came... Like my college experience, there were not a lot of games involved.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like we would just kind of sit around and talk and drink.

Griffin: Oh, god!

Rachel: And it's amazing how much more fun you can have if there is a game.

Griffin: Yeah. It's a... I think having a... Having a diversion reduces a lot of the societal pressure to, like, hang.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: That I think a lot of people feel. I don't even think you have to be particularly introverted to...

When you're like in a big group setting, talking to a lot of people and trying to keep the conversation going, the pressure that you feel to like, keep that going and not, you know, run afoul of any kind of like social norms or anything like that.

Like, it can be... it can be a lot. Especially if you are an introverted person. But having like a thing you're doing while you talk?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Oh my god, that's the best shit ever.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: This is why I... You know, beer pong was the kind of craze that it was.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Certainly when I was in college. And I don't know, I feel like kubb is sort of in that grand tradition of just... it doesn't take a ton of mental... Like, you don't have to be particularly locked in.

Your interactions with the game are very brief and there's windows of time where you're not, you know, throwing a stick, and so then you talk in that, those...

Rachel: Yeah, there's like skill involved, but there's not so much that's it's like a barrier to entry.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like, you can luck out.

Griffin: Yeah, sure. So that's kubb. Get there.

A lot of people, when I was Googling it, apparently, Virginia and Maryland have, like pretty big kubb communities, so you know.

Rachel: [trying to portmanteau "kubb" and "community"] Kubb... kubb...

Griffin: I don't think there's a portmanteau there that works.

Rachel: Kubbmunities?

Griffin: You still tried it though, and I really love that about you.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Do you want to know what our friends at home are talking about?

Rachel: Yes!

Griffin: This is a good one. If you want to send in your Small Wonder, just shoot us an email at wonderfulpodcast@gmail.com.

There's so much spam we get in that email account, and so your submissions are much appreciated to sort of change the signal-to-noise ratio a little bit.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: Keep it... keep it brief. We just want one, you know, one or two sentences about your thing.

Here's one from Trin who says, "My Small Wonder is making your own soup. As someone who is not the biggest fan of celery, a very common soups ingredient, it is wonderful to make your own soup and thoroughly enjoy every ingredient. Making something in a big, big pot also feels very cool."

I love this phenomenon. I have food categories that I don't necessarily enjoy or seek out, but when I cook it and I know what—

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah.

Griffin: ... happened to it, for whatever reason, it unlocks that gate in my mind and it's like... help...

Rachel: Yeah, this is why I started making chicken pot pie. Because Griffin is not a fan of peas and I could make it without peas.

Griffin: Hate peas, despise peas. But in a chicken pot pie I will eat most of them, but not all. It's not my favorite part of—It's still my least favorite part of the chicken pot pie.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Jess says, "My Small Wonder is people thinking of you, whether that be vocally like, 'this reminded me of you' or friends-slash-family tagging you in things online.

Especially post-pandemic, most of my communication has relied on being in online spaces and opening my phone to see notifications where I've been tagged in things or people have sent me links to things no matter how big or small, always makes my day."

Rachel: Yeah, I always do this to our friend Anna.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: If I see something that just like, gives me a real vibe of her—

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: ... I will send it to her.

Griffin: Yes, *Anna of Wonderful!* podcast fame.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: From our third—

Rachel: Our third “Love” episode.

Griffin: ... third “Love” episode.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: One of my favorites.

Rachel: She loves a llama, you know.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: And she loves a good reference to *Frasier*. [laughs]

Griffin: Absolutely. And so when Rachel finds like a great TikTok with Frasier's and Llamas in it, that gets sent right down the pipeline.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: Thank you so much 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.

Thank you to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. Go to maximumfun.org, check all the great shows that they have there and just sort of vibe with `em. Vibe on `em.

Rachel: In the McElroy Merch section...

Griffin: Yes!

Rachel: ... of mcelroy.family, or however you want to get there, there is a Poetry Corner candle!

Griffin: There is a new Poetry Corner candle. It is... I'm going to pull it up now so I can pull up the description.

Rachel: The profile?

Griffin: Yeah, the scent profile.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Mcelroymerch.com is the website by the way, that you can go to. There is a new Appalachian Workshop candle and a Poetry Corner candle.

The scent is, "Ozone, jasmine, leather, patchouli, sandalwood, tonka bean, amber, dark musk, light musk, powder." Fucking fantastic.

Rachel: [laughing] Yeah, dude.

Griffin: Fragrance oils infused with essential oils, a hundred percent American-grown soy wax. Oh my god. You are going to love it.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I guarantee you. Yeah, that's at mcelroymerch.com. And we have a bunch of other stuff there. That's it. Thank you all so much. Thank you.

Rachel: Thanks to Raleigh for being so warm and welcoming.

Griffin: You're saying this word... I always...

Rachel: Raleigh.

Griffin: I always heard "Rah-lee." But you're saying it "Rally", which is like... the short "a" sound is—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: ... usually my kind of domain.

Rachel: Can I tell you I didn't really... It just came out of my mouth. I didn't really think about if that was the way to pronounce it or not? Ra-

Griffin: I like it.

Rachel: "Rah-lee"?

Griffin: I mean, I'm sure they don't—I'm sure it's one of those things that people living in "Rah-lee" or "Rally" don't... They're like, "Whatever, man. It's like pizza."

Rachel: It's probably "Rah-lee." I think—

Griffin: It's all good, man.

Rachel: I think you're right, it's probably wrong.

Griffin: They're all—Nah, man, do not worry about it. I said "Rah-lee" when talking to them during the live shows. And they seemed to not say anything or boo me or yell at me.

Rachel: [laughing] Yeah... Uh-huh. Anyway I... It was a fun show and I had a good time and thank you.

Griffin: Yeah. I also had a great time in "Rich-moaned."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Bazinga!

Rachel: [resigned] Okay...

[theme song plays]

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