

**Still Buffering 395: "The Tortured Poets Department"
– Taylor Swift**

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[theme music, "Baby You Change Your Mind" by Nouvellas plays]

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

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Teylor Smirl.

Sydnee: I have a question and I don't know—

Rileigh: Oh.

Sydnee: — if you all will know the answer. It might be among the youth that are youthier than—

Rileigh: Wow.

Taylor: What?

Sydnee: Well, I'm just saying. The pimple patches.

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: That look like little stickers.

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Is the cool thing to wear ones that like you see, that aren't invisible? Like the one— like are very intentionally like—

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: — "This is a sticker on my face."

Rileigh: Yeah, like little stars that are multi-colored.

Sydnee: Yes.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: That is— That's the thing now?

Raleigh: Apparently. I will say, I actually only know this because I have friends that are middle school teachers.

Sydnee: Okay.

Raleigh: And they said that their students wear them every day.

Sydnee: Okay.

Raleigh: But yeah.

Sydnee: I didn't know and I was having this like... mom debate this morning. Like Charlie wanted to wear one, and I was like, "Well but— I mean everyone knows what it is, like it's the..."

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I mean, it's a pimple thing. And she was like, "Yeah, they're cool." And I don't even really think this is a pimple, in all honestly.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: So I didn't know if I should discourage like, "Oh well, you don't wanna— Just around the house thing, you don't wanna—" Or should I just be like, "Whatever. You wanna wear a sticker on your face, go for it. I don't know."

Raleigh: Apparently, they're cool. I don't know.

[pause]

Sydnee: I just— I let her go for it. Like she just wore it.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: So I guess we'll find out.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I don't—

Taylor: I see lots of people making TikToks with them on their face. I guess that's...

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: That's a pretty good judge of things, right?

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Well, if you're that public.

Raleigh: That's what the uses are.

Sydnee: Yeah, if you're that public with it that you put it on TikTok, I guess you would wear it to school.

[pause]

Sydnee: I don't know. I just— I wondered, and I wanted to be like good at— I mean, 'cause there are sometimes where I'm like, "You don't really wanna... wear that to like that." I don't know, like sometimes I can sense like, "Ooo... This might make your life hard today."

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Are your headphones falling off?

Raleigh: Yeah, they're broken, but it's fine. I got one that works.

Sydnee: [chuckles] I'm sorry.

Raleigh: I got one ear today.

Sydnee: This is my fault, this is what you get for havin' to record here.

Raleigh: Yeah, I know. You'd think that you'd have the professional setup here.

Sydnee: Justin's used to working solo most of the time, so this— I have to rearrange the whole studio to make it work for—

Raleigh: What about you?

Taylor: What? You two record together.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I mean, I don't know what— Well, I don't use headphones when we record though.

Raleigh: Well, there you go.

Sydnee: Because it's just the two of us in the same room, so I don't think about headphones.

Raleigh: This is like that challenge they did in *All Stars in Drag Race*, when Jinkx Monsoon had the little ears clipped in her hair and one of 'em fell off.

Taylor: [chuckles]

Raleigh: She said, "I'm sorry, I can only hear you half as well now."
[chuckles]

Taylor: She made it work though.

Raleigh: [chuckles] Yeah.

Taylor: I saw her as Audrey in—

Raleigh: [gasps]

Taylor: — *Little Shop of Horrors* last night.

Sydnee: Oh yeah?

Raleigh: Oh my god, how was that?

Taylor: It was amazing.

Raleigh: Oh my god, I bet.

Taylor: Just so good. Her and Corben Bleu.

Sydnee: I saw some— That's cool. I saw some videos that probably people were illegally taking.

Taylor: Yeah, they definitely don't want that to exist. [chuckles]

Sydnee: No. I mean I didn't go looking for them.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: They popped up on my—

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: My FYP.

Taylor: Well, who knows. Maybe they allowed some TikTok length videos to be made.

Raleigh: I was gonna say.

Sydnee: They were very brief. They weren't—

Raleigh: Oh.

Sydnee: Yeah, it wasn't like— I mean it wasn't like watching the show.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: It wasn't like a bootleg, it was like a very brief clip of her— of you know that, and that was it.

Taylor: That would make sense for some guerilla marketing.

Raleigh: Yeah, I feel like some of the people they've had on in Broadway shows recently, like celebrities, like when the girl from *The Summer I Turned Pretty* was in *Hadestown*.

Taylor: Mm.

Raleigh: Like I saw, like, a lot of clips that looked like they were illegally filmed.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: But they were still up, with like thousands and thousands of views, and that makes me think like, "Hmm, they're probably letting those stay up there so people wanna come see it."

Sydnee & Taylor: [simultaneously] Yeah.

Sydnee: It's a smart move.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: It is.

Sydnee: I don't know, but I'm all for like, more accessibility of like theatre.

Raleigh: I think every show should be professionally filmed and like, able to stream.

Sydnee: Yeah, I mean it doesn't— It do— It's not the same experience, so it does not diminish my desire to see a show in person, but then there are people who that is not accessible for them.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And they still get to experience the majesty of theatre.

[glass clinks lightly]

Raleigh: Yeah, and I don't think people stopped going to see *Hamilton* when *Hamilton*, you know, became streamable.

Sydnee: No.

Taylor: [chuckles] We have *Hamilton* at home now.

Raleigh: Yeah. [wheezes]

Sydnee: I've been watching— For some reason— Well, I know why, because the algorithm knows you better than yourself. I have get— I'm getting all these videos of someone watching *Hamilton* for the first time. And reacting to it.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And they're really moving. [chuckles] They make me cry sometimes. [laughs]

Taylor: Does everybody react positively?

Sydnee: The ones that I— Well, I don't know if I'm— if it's because those are the ones I watch.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: But the ones I'm getting, yeah. Like they're like— It's like people realizing like, "Man, this is good." [chuckles] "This is really good," and then like reacting to parts like, "[gasps dramatically] Oh my gosh," and like being moved, and then they're crying and then I'm crying 'cause they're crying and—

Raleigh: Right.

Taylor: Beautiful.

Sydnee: Lots of people reacting to the gasp at the end.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: And then I start crying when I think about it. I don't know. Anyway. [chuckles]

Taylor: [wheezes]

Sydnee: I don't know what that says about me. Maybe I don't wanna think about it too much. [chuckles]

Raleigh: Your TikTok knows you.

Sydnee: My TikTok really knows me.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I don't want— Please don't take away TikTok... Joe. [chuckles]

Raleigh: You got a year left of TikTok, apparently.

Sydnee: Please Joe, please don't take away TikTok. [chuckles] I don't know.

Raleigh: If Joe wants all those fresh 18-year-olds to vote for him. [chuckles] Joe should keep the TikTok.

Sydnee: I'm gonna— I mean I don't know what— Well, I mean I would probably get a lot of free time back, is what I would do.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: You know it— There's part of me that thinks it'd be really good for my brain, but that— it's still a— It's a good way that people can communi— I mean not everybody uses it just to like look at like cats and weird cartoons. Some people use it to like communicate important messages [chuckles] to each other.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: And like organize—

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: — efforts, so it's a good tool, it's an important tool. I misuse it and destroy my own brain with it, but other people use it well.

Sydnee: Well, it can be both. You know, it— 'Cause I—

Taylor: Oh no, it can, I just only use it the one way. [chuckles]

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I—

Raleigh: That's what I do.

Sydnee: I feel like I get a decent mixture of like— I mean I get the cat videos, for sure. Oh my gosh, for a while, all the one where they were like, "These cats can talk."

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Obsessed with those.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Obsessed with the talking cats. I tried— I'm trying to teach my cats to talk, it's not working.

Raleigh: Hmm.

Sydnee: But like I do get on those, or like cute kids saying funny things.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: I get, and then the girls love those.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: So, I have to— Then my algorithm thinks I really love `em, `cause the girls will watch them like 50 times in a row.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And so, then they're like, "Oh my gosh, that was your favorite video ever, really." [chuckles] "Look how many times—"

Raleigh: "Now we're just gonna show you that."

Sydnee: Yeah, "We're just gonna show you that video." But then other times it's like an expert in something explaining something, which is what I had— what I missed when Twitter— I mean, effectively Twitter's gone, I don't—

Raleigh: I don't get on Twitter.

Sydnee: I'm not gonna mess around with X, so like it's gone, and what I missed is that I used to follow a lot of experts in different arenas, and they would explain things to me using their expertise.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And I liked that, and you can get that on TikTok.

Raleigh: Well now you know all about glycerin.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: [chuckles]

Sydnee: I mean think about that, if I didn't have TikTok.

Raleigh: You wouldn't know about glycerin.

Sydnee: I wouldn't know about that.

Raleigh: So, there you go.

Sydnee: But there— I mean, there are other— There are a lot of lawyers on there.

Raleigh: Oh, I know.

Sydnee: Explaining legal things.

Raleigh: They're all over my For You page.

Sydnee: There are a lot of doctors explaining doctor things, but I usually don't watch those 'cause like... I mean I already know.

Taylor: [chuckles] Oh.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: Well I watch the lawyers teaching me things 'cause I don't know. [wheezes]

Sydnee: I'm joking. [chuckles]

Taylor: I— The—

Sydnee: I'm joking.

Taylor: There are like two kinds of bartenders on there, and one kind I enjoy, the kind that are just like making drinks or, you know, like showing a cool bit history or something, like I like that.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: I personally don't enjoy the bartenders that get on and either complain about what customers order, like they do the skits where it's like, "Oh my god"—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: “Like six girls and they order vodka sodas, bleh.” It’s like yeah, that happens, lots of people order vodka sodas. Or complain about like, just customers in general.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: ‘Cause I always feel like, I don’t know man, like if a customer is drunk and acts silly, who got ‘em drunk? You did, so... you took their money, you got ‘em intoxicated, and now you’re making fun of ‘em on TikTok for more money. I don’t feel good about that. [chuckles]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Well, I always think there’s a way to talk about like... We all— If you have a job where you interact with people, people as a whole, we are weird and we do odd things.

And there’s a way to talk about like how quirky and strange humans can be sometimes in an endearing like, “Aren’t we weird?” Because that’s true in medicine too. You see the same kind of thing where it’s like somebody in a healthcare field just complaining about patients.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And I hate that. I hate that. Like, don’t do that.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Don’t do that. Like if somebody’s coming to see you and you’re a medical professional, it may well be because they’re sick.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And then they’re probably not at their best, and maybe they need your compassion and a little bit of leeway, because you know, whatever. And so, I hate that kind of thing. Now I mean there are moments where I’m like, “Man... People are out there doin’ some wild stuff. Anyway, movin’ on.”

Raleigh: Well—

Sydnee: And like I can appreciate humanity, but agh, complaining, like I'm with you, like don't do that.

Raleigh: I just— I hate the ones where bartenders make fun of what people order because it's always something that I either order on a regular basis or have ordered before, and then I just sit there for a while, and I think like, "Man... I can't order those things anymore," and I don't want that.

Taylor: And that's the thing.

Raleigh: When I order things at like, a big, crowded bar, it's not because it's like my favorite drink of all time. It's like, "Hmm, there are 50 people here waiting for a drink, so I am going to ask for something that has two ingredients, and they're both going to be in the name of what I'm getting." [chuckles]

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: "Because that is the easiest thing to ask for in this moment." Like that's—

Taylor: Well that seems to be the two categories of drinks they complain about, are either the very easy—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: — or the very popular, and it's just like... Bro, that's how we make our money!

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: That's— [chuckles] They pay us.

Sydnee: Well—

Taylor: They pay us the same price as for a regular cocktail as to pick up a bottle of vodka and the soda gun and go beeeeeep, and that's it.

Sydnee: [chuckles]

Rileigh: And then when—

Taylor: And that's— I get money for that.

Rileigh: And when I drink a bunch of those, then I'm super happy by the end of the night, and I accidentally end up tipping like 80%.

Sydnee: [chuckles]

Taylor: [chuckles] Well.

Rileigh: That's usually what ends up happening. [chuckles]

Sydnee: Well, I mean it definitely it true, because I always— I now have like a little bit of embarrassment when I'll— when I go to a—

My usual thing, if I was at a restaurant or bar where I didn't really know the drink menu but they had like beers on tap, 'cause usually I'll get a beer. That is usually what I'm gonna order. I will usually say, "Do you have an IPA on tap?" 'Cause whatever it is, that'll probably be good.

And I don't mean that in some— For some reason, ordering an IPA is this loaded thing where like I'm snobby and I'm gonna— I'm probably a dude who's gonna lecture people about great beers.

Taylor: No.

Sydnee: And tell them about the hops or something. And it's really just like I prefer that kind of beer and I'm not particularly picky about which one it is, so if you have one of those on draft, that's what I'm gonna order and—

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And I'm not gonna ask anything about the kind of hops in it, I promise, I just— [chuckles]

Taylor: There's a big difference between "Do you have an IPA?" and "What kinds of IPAs do you have? Are they West Coast or East Coast?"

Sydnee: Mm.

Taylor: Like—

Sydnee: Oh no.

Taylor: And even that— Well, but the thing is, even that like that's— I don't know. It's a funny profession because like it's the only profession where you get mad at people for knowing things and not knowing things about your job.

Raleigh: Mm.

Taylor: [chuckles] Both of which I think are not cool. Like—

Sydnee: Right?

Taylor: Like if somebody walked into the doctor's office and said, "Hey, something's wrong with my elbow," and the doctor said, "Well what? What's wrong with it?" And they said, "Oh, I don't know," the doctor wouldn't say, "What are you doing here then?"

Raleigh: [chuckles]

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: That's true.

Taylor: "You don't know what's wrong with you. What are you doing here?" [chuckles]

Sydnee: Yeah, well and if somebody walks in and they're like, "Something's wrong with my elbow," I don't say like, "Well how would you know? Are you a doctor?"

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: [chuckles]

Taylor: Right? Like it's like— It's this very— Our job is to know things, and then if a customer also knows things, that's great. We can meet in the middle somewhere, I don't know.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I'm just— And for me it's always trying to make it as easy as possible. Like... you probably have a lager, you probably have an ale, you might have a stout and I know I don't want that.

You maybe have a cider and I'm probably not after a cider at the beginning of the— I don't know, like I kind of know what generally you might have. I don't want a pilsner.

I'm just trying to narrow it down. You got an ale. If you've got an ale, I want the ale. It's— That's— I don't know. I'm just trying to make it easy.

Taylor: [quietly] Well.

Sydnee: Give me the ale and I'll be very happy, and probably order three more. [chuckles]

Taylor: That's fine. You should feel comfortable asking for IPAs or vodka sodas or espresso martinis or mojitos. I don't know. It's like sometimes we might not have the thing that you want, and that's okay too. Like it's— [chuckles] That's our job.

Raleigh: See, that's the experience I've had several times when I'm like, "Hmm, you know what? I am gonna order a mule." Like that's just, you know... vodka, ginger beer, and lime.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: "They've gotta have all three of those things, right?" But lots of times I will ask for that and they're like, "Well I don't know what that is, so do you want something else?"

Taylor: [giggles] Well.

Raleigh: I'm like, "Well okay, a vodka cran."

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Because both of the things you need for that are in the name.

Sydnee: Mmm.

Raleigh: And I don't know how to tell you how to make a drink. I know what's in it, but I don't know how to tell you how to make it.

Sydnee: [chuckles]

Raleigh: So let's go with something much easier.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: That's my go-to now.

Taylor: I—

Raleigh: 'Cause like it's fast, it's easy.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: I think I—

Raleigh: Tastes good.

Taylor: I— As somebody that, you know, runs a bar and works in one five nights a week, I will go in bars sometimes and just the aura the bartender is giving off, I am like, "I am intimidated to order from this person."

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: "I don't think there's the right— I think ultimately what he wants is for me not to order anything and leave." [chuckles] "But I've got— I gotta find something here that works, so..."

Sydnee: Man, that's—

Taylor: "I'm just gonna order the easiest thing possible."

Raleigh: Yup. Yup.

Sydnee: I feel like that's the... That's the local coffee shop vibe that you just [chuckles]

Taylor: Yeah. Yeah.

Sydnee: If you go into like not a chain but like a local coffee shop.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And you go up, like I always feel like the person behind the counter is like, "Please."

Raleigh: "Don't order anything."

Sydnee: "Just don't order anything, please leave."

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Like— And then I know I'm gonna ruin it, 'cause I'm gonna walk up and be like, "I just want a big black coffee. That's it," and then they're gonna hate me even more than if they had to work harder, is what I usually— [chuckles]

Taylor: [chuckles]

Sydnee: That's the impression I usually get is like I ask for an easy thing and you're like, "Uuuugh!"

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: And I'm like, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry!" [chuckles]

Taylor: Yeah, that—

Sydnee: "I'll just leave. I'll give you the money and leave without the coffee, and we'll just call it a day." [chuckles]

Taylor: I don't know, maybe it's a byproduct of just like it's a skillset to be a barista, it's a skillset to be a bartender.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And I think just like any job that has a skillset required of it, you should probably also have some passion for that skillset to do the job.

But because we have this concept of like entry level jobs, jobs that, you know, no-one should really be proud to do, you just do it to pay the bills, lots of people end up in those jobs that they're not particularly enjoying it or they're not happy doing it.

It's just "Oh well this is the only job I could get," and I just— Like I wish those jobs were treated with a little bit more respect, so maybe people would—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: — either invest the time to learn the things to take pride in it, or just, you know, be fairly compensated so they're not miserable.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Both things could be a factor. [chuckles]

Sydnee: Well, there you go. Yeah, no.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I mean that's the thing, right? Like what we're— At the end of the day, the real enemy is capitalism.

Raleigh: Yup.

Taylor: Always. Always.

Sydnee: [chuckles]

Raleigh: There we go. That's it.

Sydnee: Not— Yes.

Raleigh: That's the show.

Sydnee: No matter what side of the counter you're on, we're all united against capitalism.

Taylor: Yeah. But—

Sydnee: So. [chuckles]

Taylor: But don't go on TikTok and make fun of your customers' drink orders. That's tacky.

Sydnee: Yeah, and never make fun of your patients, that's... I mean, if nothing else, it's pretty unethical.

Taylor: I—

Raleigh: There's one guy who's a bartender who I always see complaining about the order in which people order drinks. Like how you're supposed to say, I guess, the liquor first.

Taylor: [chuckles]

Raleigh: Like if you were to order like a vodka cran, you don't wanna order like—

Sydnee: A cran vodka.

Raleigh: — "Oh, can I get a cran vodka?" or whatever. I mean like that's a name so that's like silly, or like, "Can I get a Coke with like Jack or something?" And he was complaining like, "You're supposed to say the liquor first. Do you mean a Jack and Coke?"

I'm like sometimes I'm just saying things as they're coming out of my mouth, and I think "Hmm, I want a Diet Coke. Can I also get rum in that?"

Sydnee: Mm.

Raleigh: [wheezes]

Taylor: Yeah, nobody knows the arbitrary rules you made up in your head. [wheezes] I'm sorry. [chuckles]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah, well that's— I mean, or sometimes you're on an airplane and you're ordering a ginger ale and trying to debate if you should put whiskey in it or not.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And you don't know— You don't know until after you ask for the ginger ale if you're gonna say, "and whiskey."

Raleigh: "And whiskey?"

Sydnee: "And whiskey."

Taylor: Yeah... Lot—

Sydnee: Sometimes you have to think it through as you're saying it.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: I— Most people when they order martinis, they do not state the liquor, you have to ask for it.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: I don't get annoyed at that, like, "I'd like to have martini," and then it's like, "Okay, do you want vodka or gin? Do you want it dry, do you want it dirty, do you want olives? Do you want—" There's a whole series of questions that that triggers.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: But that's— it's part of my job to ask those questions. [chuckles]

Raleigh: It's part—

Taylor: Or I don't know! It's the job! [chuckles]

Raleigh: [sighs] Yeah.

Sydnee: Well.

Raleigh: Well.

Sydnee: I don't know that an anti-capitalist rant...

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Necessarily leads up into... [laughs]

Raleigh: No...

Taylor: But she does like alcohol. [chuckles]

Raleigh: She does.

Sydnee: Yeah, that's true.

Raleigh: Her go to drink is a vodka Diet Coke. [wheezes]

Taylor: Although she also—

Sydnee: What?!

Raleigh: [giggles]

Taylor: What is the drink that she likes? The— Not the— It's not the French Martini, it's the...

Raleigh: Oh, the blonde... Um.

Taylor: It's a Parisan Blonde or something?

Raleigh: 75?

Taylor: No.

Raleigh: Something like that? No?

Sydnee: How do you not know this?

Raleigh: I don't know.

Sydnee: This feels like something you're supposed to know.

Raleigh: I know. French Blonde?

Sydnee: Vodka and Diet Coke?

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: French Blonde, is that what it is?

Raleigh: Maybe?

Sydnee: I'm not making fun, that's an unconventional mix. You usually don't see— I don't know.

Raleigh: Well.

Taylor: Yeah, it's French Blonde.

Sydnee: Okay.

Raleigh: Um...

Sydnee: That's fancier.

Raleigh: Maybe she is— Maybe she also like, you know, is like me. Is like, "I just wanna go up to this bar and order two things that are very simple, and both the names of what I want are in the name of what I'm ordering." Really what I'm saying is I'm just like Taylor Swift.

Sydnee: It also, I will say, there is something very relatable and down to earth, so I don't know if she's also saying that because there is something super relatable about like when I was in college, I realized I liked vodka. And I drank a lot of Diet Coke, so I just put—

Raleigh: Put the vodka in the Diet Coke.

Sydnee: Put the vodka in the Diet Coke. That's a very like when you first start drinking and— I mean I used to do— Like I always drank Diet Dr Pepper, and I probably put vodka in it at some point—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: — when I was like, “I don't know, what should I mix this with? I have Diet Dr Pepper.”

Raleigh: Mm.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: There is something very relatable about that. [chuckles]

Raleigh: At all the Chiefs games she's been drinking something red, and I don't know if it's a vodka cran or if it's like— I mean the Chiefs colors are red, so maybe it's like some sort of like special drink.

Sydnee: Oh, I bet they di— You know they've got some sort of specialty cocktail—

Raleigh: Up in the suite, right?

Sydnee: — up in like the press boxes.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Or beer.

Sydnee: Have you ever been in one of those?

Raleigh: No. The— [chuckles] No.

Sydnee: Not at a Chiefs game, not at the— Not in an NFL game, but have you ever been in a— in one of the press boxes.

Raleigh: No.

Sydnee: Okay.

Raleigh: When would I have done that?

Sydnee: Well, the Marshall games.

Taylor: Well, at like Marshall.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: No, I was—

Sydnee: Tey, have you ever been in one?

Raleigh: I was in the student section.

Sydnee: Have you ever seen one?

Taylor: I know I was in one at some point, back in, I don't know, high school?

Sydnee: `Cause I—

Taylor: Our parents had access to one for some reason at some point.

Sydnee: This is— I know this is only tangentially related, but just on a sidebar, those are— So I— When I was campaigning, I got invited up into one by somebody who was a supporter who was wealthy enough to have one of those.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And so, I got to be inside one. And it is a very strange— If you like watching football and you've only ever sat in the stands and watched the game, this is a wild experience.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: There's just like alcohol everywhere, there's food everywhere. No-one is watching the game.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: I mean, no-one was watching the football game.

Taylor: That's the thing I don't like about it. You're very far from the game. Like.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Yeah! It feels like you're watching it on TV.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: It—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I did not enjoy it at all. I mean, part of it is that I was supposed to be like schmoozing and I was bad at that, which is why I lost, but anyway.

Taylor: [chuckles]

Sydnee: It's such a— I guarantee you they have, in that sort of setting.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: A signature cocktail, they have a bartender right there who's making drinks for everyone, they have very nice food out and you can order anything I bet, and I bet it is a very boo—

Raleigh: Mm.

Sydnee: 'Cause I mean even in the Marshall game, it's a pretty bougie experience.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I do not ever wanna do it again.

Raleigh: Sure, it is at an NFL game.

Sydnee: Let me say this. I never want to do it again.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: That stands are better. Give me—

Raleigh: Like our dad would hate that.

Sydnee: Give me a big towering— Marshall has its own beer now.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: They have their own herd— I don't remember what it's called. Herd lager. [chuckles]

Taylor: [chuckles]

Raleigh: Creative.

Sydnee: Give me a big herd beer and some popcorn—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: — and let me sit in the stands where I can feel the game. Anyway.

Raleigh: Yeah, Dad wants to yell at `em.

Sydnee & Taylor: [simultaneously] Yeah.

Raleigh: And tell `em what to do.

Taylor: You can't yell in the box.

Sydnee: They can't hear you if you're in the press box. [chuckles]

Raleigh: Right.

Taylor: Mm.

Rileigh: Taylor Swift.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Rileigh: Released a new album. And actually it was two albums. So there's that. Called *The Tortured Poets Department*. And then she, at two AM, released *The Tortured Poets Department: The Anthology*, which was an additional 15 songs. So if you're counting at home, that is 31 songs that she put out in one day.

Sydnee: When you... texted us.

Rileigh: [sighs]

Sydnee: At I believe it was 2:15.

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: In the morning.

Taylor: Right.

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: When you texted us.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Rileigh: Well, it was right after it had come out.

Sydnee: Okay. Were you already up?

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Or do you have some kind of Taylor Swift alarm on your phone?
[chuckles]

Rileigh: No. No, I stayed up until midnight because that's when the album came out.

Sydnee: Right.

Rileigh: So the original 16 songs was a little over like an hour or something.

Sydnee: Okay.

Rileigh: So I was already up until 1, and then I was on Instagram, you know, watching everyone like, reacting to the album being out and everything.

And then Taylor Swift, all of a sudden, had a countdown on her Instagram profile. With no words, no title or anything, it was just a countdown to two AM. And I was like, "Well that's in like 45 minutes. What's this gonna be? I have to see."

Sydnee: Okay.

Rileigh: And there was already a lot of speculation it was gonna be a double album, or like with *Midnight* she did the three AM edition, which had like seven extra songs or something like that.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Rileigh: Six extra songs, so we thought like, "Oh, this is two AM. That was three AM, this is two AM. Like she's counting down to, I don't know, something."

Sydnee: Gotcha.

Rileigh: Like three, two, one. She'd been doing a lot of twos, like the hand sign, the peace sign. She'd been doing that a lot, promoting this album.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: She did it when she announced it as well, so that's what people thought with two AM. And then when she had a countdown to two AM, it's like, "Oh, man, this must be somethin' important," and it was.

Sydnee: She'd been doing a lot of peace signs, and that was part of the clue.

Raleigh: Well—

Taylor: Two.

Raleigh: — when she announced the album at the Grammys, she yeah. She said, "I have been working on this album, keeping it secret for two," and then paused and left her hand up like that, "years." And then at her like pop-up library thing she had—

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: — in LA to promote the album, there was a little like hand statue thing that was like the peace sign, and like the two people that are featured on the album, Florence Welch and Post Malone, had posted pictures doing peace signs. And Jack Antonoff, her producer, posted a picture doing a peace sign.

Sydnee: Alright.

Raleigh: So people were like, two.

Sydnee: Two.

Raleigh: And we're— It was correct. Two AM she—

Sydnee: It was clever, she—

Raleigh: It was a two album.

Sydnee: It was clever, she kept you up that late.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: To listen to her music.

Rileigh: And I did.

Sydnee: You know, sleep deprivation is a tool used— [chuckles]

Rileigh: [chuckles] You know, it—

Taylor: In cult—

Sydnee: — in brainwashing.

Taylor: In cults, yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Rileigh: The—

Taylor: Huh.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Rileigh: The worst part was that this album is very wordy, and at midnight when the original album came out, I at least could go on Genius and see like, pretty rough translations of the words.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Rileigh: But like at least be able to read pretty much what they were. But no-one had any idea that another 15 were about to come out. So I had to lay there and listen to 15 songs without being able to look at the lyrics.

Just like at two AM, trying to stay awake, trying to [chuckles] focus on all the things that were happening, and I couldn't process it. But I did listen to all of them when they came out.

Sydnee: It's like a '90s music experience.

Rileigh: Yeah, I know.

Sydnee: That's why everybody doesn't know the lyrics to some songs.

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: Everyone just sings the wrong words, 'cause we never—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Well, unless they were in the liner.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: CDs used to do that. You would unfold it—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: — and all the lyrics were in the CD liner.

Raleigh: Well, I have her CD for the original album.

Sydnee: Oh.

Raleigh: That has that. But she didn't put out a CD that has all 31 songs on it.

Sydnee: Gotcha.

Raleigh: I don't think— Can you fit that many songs on a CD?

Taylor: I mean, I— Prob—

Sydnee: Well.

Taylor: I don't know, has CD technology advanced?

Raleigh: I don't know.

Taylor: That would be a two track— Or a two-album compilation.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Back in the day.

Sydnee: Yeah, it—

Raleigh: That's what I was thinkin'.

Sydnee: Like the *Forrest Gump* soundtrack. [chuckles]

Taylor: Yeah, that was two.

Raleigh: It's exactly like the *Forrest Gump* soundtrack.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: It is.

Sydnee: That was a good soundtrack.

Raleigh: Oh.

Taylor: [chuckles]

Sydnee: I listened to it a lot.

Raleigh: But yeah, this was her 11th studio album.

Sydnee: Uh-huh.

Raleigh: *Tortured Poets Department*. And—

Sydnee: There are— So there are several people being called out on this album.

Raleigh: Yes. Oh man.

Sydnee: That was—

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: Most of the discourse I've seen around the album is about who are the songs about?

Raleigh: Ooo.

Sydnee: And who got shade thrown.

Raleigh: So I—

Sydnee: At them, I guess.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: [chuckles] Teylor, you had a thought?

Teylor: Did sh—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Teylor: Well, did she only— I remember the relationship with the Healy fellow.

Raleigh: Yes.

Teylor: Was very short-lived.

Raleigh: [wheezes]

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Teylor: Because he's a very bad man.

Raleigh: Yes.

Teylor: And— But it seems like she got a lot of good content. Do you think Taylor Swift just... dates an occasional... not great guy for content? [chuckles]

Raleigh: So...

Teylor: It's like, "Hey let me just hang out with this—"

Raleigh: I have actually thought about—

Taylor: “— butthead for a little while. Get a good couple songs out of it.”

Sydnee: “This one’s a— Yeah, it’s a real clunker, but it’ll be worth it.”

Taylor: [chuckles]

Raleigh: I’ve thought about this a lot because I don’t like listening to her albums when they first come out and trying to figure out like what they’re actually about, ‘cause that’s what a lot of people do just to make fun of her. And I’m like, “No, I’d just rather listen to the music.” And she’s said a lot of times she wants her songs to be like her fans’.

Sydnee: Mm.

Raleigh: Like she wants us to listen to them and whatever they mean to you is what they mean to you, they don’t have one meaning or they’re not about one person.

But. When she put out this album, everyone thought “Well she just got out of a seven-year long relationship. That is what— This is who it’s going to be about.” And maybe like a Travis Kelcee song.

Sydnee: Mm.

Raleigh: Depending on when she wrote them, which there were. But no-one thought [chuckles] there would be any Matty Healy songs, but that is most of the album.

Taylor: Right?

Raleigh: And I— Like listening to it, I have come to the decision that if you’re trying to put the timeline together, there’s a lot of things she hints at. And there’s a big, long poem she wrote that’s in the opening of the album, like if you buy it physically, it’s like at the front of the album that she wrote about what this album is, basically.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: And if you read that and look at the lyrics, I have decided that they were rumored to have dated 10 years ago in 2014.

He was seen wearing a 1989 Taylor Swift shirt the same day she was wearing a 1975 shirt, and they were seen out together sometimes and they talked about each other in interviews, and The 1975 put out some songs that were rumored to have been about Taylor Swift. But they never publicly were like in an official relationship.

And then as soon as she broke up with Joe Alwyn, she was in public with Matty Healy. So... based on a lot of the songs, I am of the belief now that over the last 10 years, she has been talking to Matty Healy like on and off. And when she knew she was going to be ending this relationship with Joe Alwyn, part of it was because she had been talking to Matty Healy more.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Rileigh: And she was like, "Oh, he wants to be with me now. Like it's been 10 years, he's grown up, he's matured, he's changed. He wants a real relationship now, like he's different. He actually wants to be with me.

Like I'm in a relationship now where I don't feel like loved or appreciated, but he would do that. He's telling me all these good things about like all the things he wants. He wants marriage and he wants a family and all this good stuff that the partner I'm with now doesn't want.

So I knew I was gonna break up with him anyways, but now I'm gonna break up with him and go be with... Matty."

Sydnee: Okay.

Rileigh: And then she did, but then it didn't work out.

Sydnee: That makes sense.

Rileigh: So I think that's why there was a lot of content about it, because it— Yes, it was a very short relationship publicly, but I feel like there was a lot more there that we didn't know about.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Well and maybe she had a big narrative about it in her head.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Maybe like in her mind, this was something that— It's kind— I mean it sounds like a sort of fate thing.

Raleigh: Yeah. Well yeah.

Sydnee: Like a will they won't they.

Taylor: Mm.

Raleigh: That's what— Yeah.

Sydnee: And then eventually, like they wind up together, yeah.

Raleigh: In the title track, "Tortured Poets Department," she says, you know, "Everyone we know understands why it's meant to be, 'cause we're both crazy." [chuckles]

[hammering sounds from a distance]

Raleigh: Which is a crazy song, 'cause she name drops Lucy Degass, who's one of the singers in boygenius, who famously hates Matty Healy. And Jack Antonoff, her producer. And Charlie Puth.

Sydnee: I feel like she's not usually that... like obvious about...

Raleigh: She's not.

Sydnee: Like—

Raleigh: She's never put names in a song like that before.

Taylor: Mm.

Sydnee: Right? Like isn't that the thing where she's like... I mean—

Raleigh: She's intentionally vague because John Mayer tried to sue her that one time.

Sydnee: Right. Well, and it also ha— It's always had that sort of... "You're so vain, you probably think that this song is about you" kind of vibe.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Like yeah, if you wanna come out and say you're the one this song's about—

[phone notification dings]

Sydnee: — that can only look bad for you, so.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: It's like, yeah.

Sydnee: You know.

Taylor: The Kim song.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Which feels very... I mean, I don't think that there's any question that that's who it's about.

Raleigh: "thank you aIMee."

Taylor: But the way that the title is written, that it spells out "Kim." Like.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: How— [chuckles] I'm sure you've got plausible deniability there, but still.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: That feels direct.

Raleigh: Well—

Sydnee: Well, I think it is, I mean yeah.

Raleigh: And it's the fact that she has a line where she says, "I've changed your name and any real defining clues."

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Like well yeah, I guess in the sense that you're singing Aimee, but you did capitalize the letters in Kim in the title of the song, Taylor.
[chuckles]

Sydnee: Yeah, it's pretty...

Raleigh: It's pretty obvious.

Sydnee: Well, and the spray tan, bronze—

Raleigh: And the spray tan statue.

Sydnee: — statue or whatever.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah.

[pause]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: That felt pretty like, "Well, okay."

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I mean, we know what this is all about.

Taylor: I thou—

Raleigh: That's why there's some people that think it's really about like Carly Kloss or someone who she's rumored to have beef with. But the Kim is like a red herring.

Taylor: Well that—

Sydnee: [wheezes]

Raleigh: So you really don't know who it's about.

Taylor: That's just throwin' Kim Kardashian under the bus for fun then.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: [chuckles]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Ahhh, I think it has to be.

Raleigh: I think it's gotta be Kim.

Sydnee: I don't think— I mean, I think if you think of like pseudo-celebrities with prominent tans, I don't know.

Raleigh: Yeah.

[phone notification dings]

Sydnee: I mean, I don't know, that's what I would think.

Raleigh: There's also a song called "Cassandra" that also is about Kim and Kanye.

Taylor: Mm.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Do you think like— I mean, 'cause that was a while ago. Do you think it's just finally been long enough that she can like...

Raleigh: I... think... that— Well yeah, I think that's part of it. But there are also a lot of songs on this album where she's kind of like... outwardly talking about [sighs] not negative towards her fans, but just like, "Hey, my life has been pretty hard and you all don't, you know, always help

that. Sometimes you all are contributing to that.” It’s a little bit more like personal—

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Rileigh: — than a lot of her like stuff is. And I’m wondering if maybe there’s just a lot of songs or a lot of things she’s wanted to write about in the past that she just never has felt like she can so clearly say.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Rileigh: And now she’s just like, “Yeah, whatever. Here’s 31 songs, I’m gonna say whatever I want.”

Sydnee: Yeah

Taylor: Well—

Sydnee: She’s a billionaire.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: I saw— ‘Cause I did see— I looked at some reviews. Some are very glowing, some are less so.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Taylor: But I saw on review that was talking specifically about like the fact that she’s bringing up Kim and Kanye beef, and like that was so long ago, it feels... a little like... It feels a little weird to still be talking about this, this long after the fact.

Rileigh: Right.

Taylor: But I don’t know, I feel like that’s part of her appeal is that it like... Like you can never control how long you’re hung up about a situation, you know.

Raleigh: Exactly.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Sometimes—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Sometimes the same person haunts you for years and year and years and years.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: After they've left your life, and you just can't control that. So I think that that's— And especially when you're younger, I feel like those relationships impact you harder and feel like they're never gonna leave your head.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And that's something that speaks to her audience.

Raleigh: Yeah. Well, and when she did her TIME person of the year interview, which was just, I mean, last year, I guess. She talked about that situation, not explicitly, but it was the first time she'd really talked about how it affected her, and how she like moved out of the country and went into hiding, and no-one saw her for years, because she felt like her entire career had ended and everyone hated her.

And obviously that wasn't true, I mean she still is loved by millions of people and making money off of her music, but that's why she didn't put anything out, she didn't do appearances, she didn't do anything for years because of that situation. And that was the first time she'd really talked about it that way, so I mean, I'm sure doing that interview and talking about that brought up, you know, feelings.

But she also makes a lot of references to literature and mythology and stuff in this album, and maybe she just read that story and was like, "Ah, I got a good metaphor for this."

Sydnee: Well, and I think it is very clear, like even as you were talking about sort of why would she write so many songs about the guy that she was in a— what we thought was a shorter relationship with.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I think that she— And I believe she's said this before. Like what's real and what happened, and what kind of was just happening in her head.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Is all sort of mooshed together.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And so some of this isn't literal.

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: It was— It's like, "This is my perception of the event."

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: "And no-one's perception of memories are, you know, gonna be 100% factual."

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: It's filtered.

Raleigh: Yeah. Also learning a lot with this album. I didn't know the story of Cassandra.

Sydnee: [chuckles]

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: I'd never heard that before. I had no idea. I looked it up, I was like, "Well who's Cassandra?"

Taylor: Educational.

Raleigh: To someone else, and I looked it up, I'm like [breathily] "Oh my god."

Taylor: You know the—

Raleigh: "This is just crazy."

Sydnee: [chuckles]

Taylor: The reason that I investigated the story of Cassandra, 'cause I knew it but that's only because *Scream 3*.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: With Neve Campbell, they're putting on Cassandra.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Ohhhhh.

Sydnee: That's true.

Taylor: Remember they're— That's the scene.

Raleigh: Oh my gosh.

Sydnee: I forgot about that.

Raleigh: I didn't even realize what that was from.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Well, that was the pop culture thing—

Raleigh: Wow.

Taylor: — that made me go "Wait, I wanna know what this is about."
[chuckles]

Raleigh: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, I'd never heard of that.

Sydnee: Well it's— I mean, think that that sort of like... I mean, what you have to imagine is that she's in her own like creative world, she's like dramatizing these things in a way.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And I don't mean that in a negative way.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: But like that's a good thing for creating music.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And for connecting to people, 'cause then you get into universal themes that everybody can—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: — find themselves in.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: You know? And it does help with, and I was saying this to you earlier Raleigh, Justin and I were talking about as we were listening like it must be so hard for her to draw on things that are relatable to other people, because her life cannot be relatable in any sense any— You know?

Raleigh: No.

Sydnee: Like her actual day to day experiences would be so far removed from what any of us would ever—

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: You know? I mean I can't even imagine.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And like you can't talk— That's not a song.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: You know. No-one wants to hear about how like rich and famous and glamorous—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: — someone's life is in a song that they're trying to relate to, 'cause it's like, I mean, "I don't— Where am I in that?"

Raleigh: Although she kinda does in a couple of them, 'cause "I Can Do It With A Broken Heart," which people guessed that's what it would be about when they saw the track list.

Sydnee: Sure.

Raleigh: They were like, "Oh, that's gotta be about the Eras tour."

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: And it is. The production where it's her in ear sounds.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: Like what she's hearing when she's on stage, the counting and the beats and everything, the fact that that's the backing production of this track I think is just so smart.

But yeah, that's about her doing the Eras tour after a massive breakup and being devastated the whole time, but having to look like she's having the time of her life. "Clara Bow" is about like you're always— there's always gonna be one new it girl.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: Who like everyone loves, and you're the new thing and you're real, but just wait and, you know, you're gonna be the old thing and someone's gonna look like you and become the new you.

Sydnee: Yeah, but I think like if you talk about the idea of “I have a broken heart but I still have to do something hard.”

Raleigh: That’s true.

Sydnee: That’s a very like classic—

Raleigh: [chuckles] I—

Sydnee: — female empowerment, especially. Like it— I mean it could—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: It could be any gender, but like I feel like that’s a really—

Raleigh: “I cry a lot but I am so productive” [chuckles] is—

Sydnee: I mean that’s—

Raleigh: Is a line that I’m like, “Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.” [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah. I mean that’s a very like, “Yeah, but I’m still so tough that I’m gonna get up and brush my hair and...”

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: “Wash your face, girl.” Wasn’t that that book? “Girl, wash your face.”

Raleigh: No idea.

Sydnee: [chuckles] That was a book for a while. I didn’t read it.

Raleigh: Oh.

Sydnee: But I think it’s—

Raleigh: But yeah.

Sydnee: It’s probably about something like that, right?

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Probably.

Taylor & Sydnee: [chuckle]

Rileigh: Or the— “The Albatross,” which again, I didn’t know what that was either.

Taylor: Oh.

Rileigh: It’s a big bird.

Sydnee: Yeah. [laughs]

Rileigh: A real bird, it’s a real bird.

Taylor: Yeah well, it’s a big— it’s a— [wheezes] That’s one way, yeah.

Rileigh: It’s a big bird. Well, it’s a real bird.

Taylor: Succinctly, it’s a big bird.

Sydnee: Uh-huh, yeah.

Rileigh: I thought it was fake. It’s real.

Taylor: What?

Rileigh: Isn’t it?

Sydnee: You— Yeah.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Taylor: No, it’s a bird that—

Rileigh: I thought it was a—

Taylor: — sailors took as an omen of...

Sydnee: Right.

Taylor: I mean, it's a whole—

Raleigh: And I thought it was like a myth.

Taylor: — a whole story about why you don't kill an albatross.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: Well that's the thing, and if you killed it you had to wear it around your neck.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Like shame.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: And that's why she— And that's why they think this one's about Travis Kelce also. Is because she's basically saying like, "Everyone told you I will make your life miserable, I'm gonna, you know—"

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: "— bring all this negative attention to you. I'm crazy, I'm dangerous."

Taylor: [chuckles]

Raleigh: "And you're gonna have to like, what, you know. I'm your burden, basically."

Sydnee: Well but then he won the Superbowl, so.

Raleigh: Well, but okay. Imagine—

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: Imagine how you must feel as a real person if you're like, "I'm 34. Everyone I've ever dated and had a long-term relationship with now has said something negatively about me publicly, and I am known as the person who gets in relationships and they always end. That is what I am known as."

[pause]

Taylor: Ehhh...

Sydnee: Yeeeeeah.

Raleigh: And like trying to step out and date someone for the first time after that, and you're like, "I know all the things you've heard about me. You've heard that I'm crazy, you've heard that I'm toxic, you've heard that I'm gonna write songs about you."

Sydnee: Which she is.

Taylor: Well that's—

Raleigh: Well yeah, but she'll write great songs about him.

Sydnee: [chuckles]

Taylor: I mean, but she talks—

Sydnee: For now. [chuckles]

Taylor: She calls herself crazy a lot. I don't know. It's interesting how much of the perception of Taylor Swift is her own negative self-image that's reflected in her songs.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Like that she kind of perpetuates that. And I'm not saying—that's not a judgment.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: I think that that is a very human thing to do.

Sydnee: Mm.

Taylor: But like I'm like I don't think of like her in public as being crazy or a man-eater.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: I think she talks about herself, worried that that's how she's perceived a lot, and then we all kind of pick up on that.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: I don't know, it's sort of a—

Raleigh: Well—

Taylor: Sort of a self-fulfilling prophecy. [chuckles]

Raleigh: I'm sure that— I mean, we've all done it. You focus on the negative things people are saying about you publicly more than the positive things.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Sure, of course, oh yeah.

Raleigh: So you know, even if there's millions and millions of us who are talking about how much we love her, if there's some news outlet that's gonna focus on like what she looks like or—

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: — you know, how many kids she's dated, that's what she's gonna focus on. Speaking of prophecy, she even sings about that. How she feels like she is cursed to live a life where no-one actually wants to be with her. Which is pretty sad.

Taylor: Well that's the Cassandra thing to.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: I mean that isn't her prophecy, but. [chuckles]

Raleigh: Yeah. That's— I was talking to Mom about it, and Mom said like, you know, "Do you think that just like she gets all this money and all this success and all this fame, and her one thing maybe that she can't ever have is just that stable, you know, lasting relationship. Like she gets everything else, maybe she just doesn't get that?"

It's like, "Well, she did write a song about that. She said she has everything else, and she has all this money and stuff, but she wants someone who wants to spend time with her."

Sydnee: That's tough. Those two things can certainly be tied together.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Because how do you trust that the person you're with... I don't know. Which, I mean, you could see where that would make someone who you've known for a very long time very appealing.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Because then...

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: If they knew you before... You know.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Like maybe they really like whoever you are.

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: And not just what their idea of you is. But—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I don't know. That's also though, I will say, as you get older. Everybody's always kind of in love with or not in love with, or liking or not liking their own version of the other person.

Raleigh: Well yeah.

Sydnee: You know? I mean, we all kind of create stories around the people in our lives, good, bad, indifferent. And... yeah.

Raleigh: Well, I mean maybe that's why Matty Healy was so appealing to her. He's famous too, he has his own stuff—

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: — people are saying about him, so you know, dating her wouldn't be, you know, the big thing that he's done that's awful.

Sydnee: Sure.

Raleigh: Like it was for other people she's dated.

Sydnee: No, he had other things. [chuckles]

Raleigh: Yeah, he had lots of other things. And he had known her for 10 years, and— I mean she wrote "Peter" about him, which is Peter Pan, but it's about him.

About like, you know, "I thought you were gonna go away and grow up and come back and find me and get me," and had this idealized version of this like relationship they were gonna have where they both were gonna be grown up and mature and finally together forever. And that didn't happen.

Sydnee: No. That never works out that way.

Raleigh: No.

Sydnee: That's— I sort of had a relationship like that.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: But then he joined a cult.

Raleigh: Well.

Sydnee: And tried to get me to join it, and...

Raleigh: There you go.

Taylor: Yeah, that's how that goes, usually.

Raleigh & Sydnee: [simultaneously] Yeah.

Sydnee: I didn't.

Raleigh: Everyone's got a Matty. Yeah. That's good.

Taylor: Yeah. Well—

Raleigh: "The Smallest Man Who Ever Lived," which is the most scathing song she's ever written.

Taylor: That's— [chuckles]

Sydnee: That's rough. That's a rough one.

Raleigh: Oh man.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Ooo.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I was kinda surprised that "Fortnight" was the single, 'cause it wasn't— I mean I didn't dislike it.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: But it wasn't my favorite.

Raleigh: Also not my favorite.

Sydnee: I like—

Raleigh: I think it's because Post Malone's in it.

Sydnee: I liked "Florida" a lot.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: I liked "Florida" a lot. I— *Fortnite*, that's a game, right? I was just— I know she's using the term—

Raleigh: [wheezes]

Taylor: The word classically—

Sydnee: Yes, it is game.

Taylor: — as in to represent a length of time that is a fortnight.

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: But I couldn't— Especially with like the video with like her with the tattoos, I was like, "What is— Is this about playing *Fortnite*? I don't want— I don't know about this song." [chuckles]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: Yeah. That's been a meme on TikTok, or girls posting pictures with their boyfriends like, "Hey let's play Ti— Or let's play *Fortnite*," and then it slides over and it's like, "He thinks they're gonna play *Fortnite* the game and she thinks they're gonna play "Fortnight" the song."

Taylor & Sydnee: [chuckle]

Sydnee: That's a weird—

Raleigh: She should've thought about that, to be fair. That is what I immediately think of when I think of "fortnight."

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I thought it too.

Raleigh: It's not even spelled the same way.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: No.

Sydnee: Why did I see— I didn't read it. Why was there an article about Emma Stone's connection to "Florida"?

Raleigh: Oh, I think she's credited in it.

Sydnee: Is she? Okay.

Raleigh: Yeah, I think she's credited as like... in the credits of all the many people who work on the song, she's in there.

Sydnee: Okay.

Raleigh: I don't know why.

Sydnee: She helped write it. I don't know.

Taylor: She did, maybe.

Raleigh: She does, I don't know, some of the backing yells of "Florida," I don't know.

Sydnee: I was curious. Maybe. I don't know.

Raleigh: I do love that song, the "F me up, Florida."

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: It's great.

Taylor: It's such a funny—

Raleigh: A lot of people said it's the—

Taylor: Go ahead.

Raleigh: It's the best she's ever sounded cursing on this album.
[chuckles]

Sydney: [chuckles]

Taylor: It is, it's the fact that it's about Florida, I love it, it was one of my favorites too. But it was also just such a... Just I feel like there's gonna be a lot of good videos with this song.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydney: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: About crazy people in Florida doing crazy things. [chuckles]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydney: Yeah.

Raleigh: Someone asked her "Why Florida?"

Taylor: That Florida has an anthem,.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydney: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: Someone asked her "Why Florida?" and she said, "I don't know. I just thought like when you, you know, need to get away from everything, you need to hide somewhere, like from the public attention or from a heartbreak, and you need to get away and go somewhere. Even

mentally, like metaphorically, it seems like Florida would be like a good way to say that like you're gettin' out of here, you're goin' to Florida."

Sydnee: Yeah. Yeah. Well, and I mean they're just like— They're gettin' rid of all the laws, right?

Taylor: [chuckles]

Sydnee: There?

Raleigh: Well, and Florence Welch sings about, you know, how you can... [giggles] bury all the bodies and sink 'em in the swamp.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: And no-one asks any questions in Florida. [laughs]

Sydnee: It's just Florida. I mean it's Florida, so it's okay there.

Raleigh: It's fine. It's fine.

Sydnee: You're just— That's fine there. I assume, I don't know. We should be really careful. This is West Virginia where we—

Raleigh: Oh, we can't say a thing, yeah.

Sydnee: We physically in this moment, and... I mean.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I want to disappear somewhere, you could probably disappear, here.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: [chuckles] I meant that in a good way, I didn't mean that in like I would kill you.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I meant like—

Raleigh: Oh, I know.

Taylor: Sure you did.

Sydnee: No, I did. I have no intention of murdering anyone. I'm just saying, you could disappear here pretty easily if you wanted to.

Raleigh: I did wanna point out that the first half of the album— Which I know she said it's a double album, which insinuates two albums, but the anthology is just all one—

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: All one thing. The first half, the original, was mostly co-written by her and Jack Antonoff, who... did all like the— He does all like her synthy—

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: — kinda production stuff. The second half was almost every single song except for two that were written just by Taylor Swift, were written by her and Aaron Dessner, who produced *Folklore* and *Evermore*.

Sydnee: Mm.

Raleigh: Which are much more like acoustic and mellow.

Sydnee: I can feel that.

Raleigh: So like, yeah.

Sydnee: I can feel that, yeah.

Raleigh: Like you can feel the difference.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: Between the two, and I actually tend to like the second half a little bit more. But I also was a big *Evermore* fan, and he wrote most of the songs on there, so that makes sense.

Sydnee: See, and I really like Jack Antonoff and I like poppy stuff too.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: So I think I was more drawn to the earlier songs.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: There is a song on there that makes me think of your kids. "Robin," which is the name of Aaron Dessner's daughter, so I wonder if that's why it's called that.

Sydnee: Aww.

Raleigh: But yeah.

Sydnee: Well that's sweet.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I don't know if Charlie has listened to the whole album yet.

Raleigh: It's the next to last song.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: On the entire album, so.

Sydnee: That's what I was gonna say. I know— 'Cause she keeps goin' back and listening to the ones she likes over and over again so she can memorize the words.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I remember being that—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: You know, you're that age where it's like, "I want people to know I like this, so I wanna know all the words to it and sing along."

Raleigh: See, I— [chuckles] had a six-and-a-half-hour car ride.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: So I just turned on the entire two hours anthology from start to finish three and a half times.

Sydnee: There you go.

Raleigh: So I could know the words to all 31 songs. [chuckles]

Sydnee: [chuckles] But no, I mean I liked it. I like it a lot.

Raleigh: Good.

Sydnee: I mean I like—

Raleigh: I know it's a lot. But, I—

Sydnee: I enjoyed it.

Raleigh: I do enjoy listening to all of it.

Sydnee: And it's nice to listen to music that the kids like.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: So.

Raleigh: [chuckles] Yeah.

Sydnee: I think, like I said, my favorite song was "Florida."

Raleigh: That was your favorite?

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. I also really like Florence + the Machine, so.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: I do too. Yeah.

Taylor: I like, "The Bolter." I don't know.

Raleigh: That was my favorite.

Taylor: Really?

Sydnee: Mm.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: And the story in that song I really enjoyed.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. I think that's my favorite. That or... "Guilty As Sin."

Sydnee: Mm.

Taylor: Mm.

Raleigh: I do really like, which again is about Matty Healy.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Or... "The Black Dog."

Sydnee: Yeah, that was a good one.

Raleigh: Which Taylor Swift wrote entirely herself.

Taylor & Sydnee: [simultaneously] Oh.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: That was a good one.

Rileigh: The real bar called The Black Dog is— in London now has, you know, obviously made a very big deal of this.

Sydnee: Sure.

Taylor: Oh. [chuckles]

Rileigh: Where they have a Swift burger on their menu now, like they're selling their merch, like worldwide.

Sydnee: Why not?

Rileigh: I get it, I get it.

Sydnee: I liked the London one too.

Taylor: Mm.

Rileigh: Mm.

Sydnee: "So Long London," yeah.

Rileigh: That was about Joe Alwyn.

Sydnee: Yeah. I—

Taylor: That—

Sydnee: I could piece that together.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Is that the only song about him?

Rileigh: You know, I... think that one is. I think "LOML"—

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Rileigh: — which is "love of my life" or "loss of my life." I think that's about him. I think there's no way she wrote "You're the loss of my life" about Matty Healy. That just feels like I can't imagine that.

Taylor: Mm.

Raleigh: When everything else about him is so angry.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: On this album. Either like you can tell it was written when they were together, and it's like looking forward and positive, or she was thinking about being with him. Or it's angry afterwards. Like there's no...

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Longing left. And all the ones that are more sad and feel like longing and missing and depression I think are about Joe Alwyn. I think "The Black Dog" is about Joe Alwyn.

Sydnee: Mm.

Raleigh: Um... "LOML," "So Long London"... Honestly, that might be it.

Taylor: Mm.

Sydnee: She references a guy in suits a couple times. Who's the guy with the suits?

Raleigh: [chuckles] So... The "Jehovah's Witness suit" line is one of my favorite. That's in "The Smallest Man Who Ever Lived."

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Because if you look up a picture of Matty Healy performing in a show, The 1975, he's always wearing a suit with like a long, skinny tie that's tucked into his waistband. Like always. So the Jehovah's Witness suit [through laughter] is absolutely Matty Healy.

Sydnee: That's ooph. Yikes. I—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I doubt he ever will again. [chuckles]

Raleigh: Yup. You know, the best part was afterwards, when it came out, his team released like a statement, or like a quote unquote “source,” basically someone from his team released a statement saying like they know there would be songs, they got a heads up from Taylor there would be songs that were about him.

But they were pleased with... what actually ended up coming out. And all I could think was if you're please with “The Smallest Man Who Ever Lived” being written about you—

Taylor & Sydnee: [chuckle]

Raleigh: — how bad were you to her?!

Taylor: “Could’ve been worse.” [chuckles] Yikes.

Raleigh: Like, what?

Sydnee: Well. [sighs] I also think— I mean I think the best move is to not say anything.

Raleigh: Well yeah.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Just keep your mouth shut.

Raleigh: Well, imagine—

Sydnee: There’s no winning this battle, but like.

Raleigh: Imagine how Joe Alwyn feels, who did like damage control as soon as the album was announced, who then listened to it and is like, “I’m not even on this album.” [giggles]

Taylor: “It’s all Matty Healy.”

Raleigh: “We dated for seven years and it’s not even about me.” [laughs]

Sydnee: Yikes.

Taylor: If—

Raleigh: “It’s about how she was dreaming about being with someone else while she was with me.”

Taylor: I don’t know, maybe that the— maybe that’s the problem.

Sydnee: Or the harshest—

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: That’s the harshest— Yeah.

Taylor: Well.

Raleigh: And of course there are two songs about Travis Kelcee.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: I just wanted to say, “The Alchemy” is on the main album, and I don’t think it is one of the best out of all of the 31 at all.

Sydnee: No.

Raleigh: But I do think the reason she put it on the main album is because she was like, “There are so many football references in this song—”

Sydnee: [chuckles]

Raleigh: “— y’all are gonna know who it’s about, and you’re gonna know that I am okay now. Everything is okay now.” [chuckles] But that and “So High School” are about football boy.

Sydnee: Well, we’ll see, we’ll see. I mean, I don’t know. Maybe there will be a 31-song album released about Travis Kelcee in a not so flattering way eventually. [chuckles]

Taylor: Oh no.

Raleigh: I mean, without Travis Kelcee, we wouldn't have gotten the line "You know how to ball, I know Aristotle," which is what she says in "So High School." [wheezes]

Taylor: Mmm...

Sydnee: Alright.

Taylor: You know, it's... it's her curse? I mean, is that it? That she can't— Like, to drive her creative process she needs heartbreak.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: So she can't stay in a relationship because she wants to be an artist. There's a— I think we're talked about the Irks before. There's an Irks song that's about that.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: It's called "Prayin' For Rain," and it's a guy that can only write brokenhearted love songs but he's in a good relationship.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: The— It's a—

Raleigh: Well.

Taylor: It's a curse that's self-perpetuating, Taylor. [chuckles] You gotta—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: You gotta choose.

Raleigh: She—

Taylor: Do you want love or success? You already have success, you could stop now. [chuckles]

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: She even put that in the little opening poem, where she said— It's very artistic the way she said it, but basically "When I told him how horrible he was to me, he smiled because he knows that it's the worst men that I write the best."

Taylor: Oh wow.

Raleigh: Which is true. I mean, everyone's talking about how the two songs about Travis Kelcee are two of the worst on the album. It's like well just let her be happy. She's just tryin' to write somethin' happy.

Taylor: Is that—

Raleigh: Just let her.

Taylor: No, see that's why she's putting out so many albums. She's trying to just write 'em all out of her, and then she can retire and actually have a happy life.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Now, ending—

Taylor: And say, "Look at my giant catalogue of music."

Raleigh: Ending on "The Manuscript" in the whole thing, and ending on "Clara Bow" in the original did raise some questions for people about is she done.

Sydnee: Mm.

Taylor: Really?

Raleigh: 'Cause "Clara Bow" is like well now she's old news and they're looking for the next new thing to replace her. And "The Manuscript" is— I mean it's about, I think, John Mayer or Jake Gyllenhaal, one of the two, but pretty much "I've written all these songs out about my life, it's the

manuscript of my life, and now they're not mine anymore. It's done, it's over."

Sydnee: I can't imagine.

Raleigh: Hmm.

Sydnee: She's so young.

Raleigh: We'll see.

Sydnee: We'll see.

Taylor: How many billions of dollars do you need before you go like, "Hey, I'm good." [chuckles]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I don't think— I think— I don't think it's about the money. I think she's trying to prove something else. I don't know what it is. I don't pretend to know.

Raleigh: Well—

Sydnee: But I think it's about proving something that's beyond money.

Raleigh: I think she probably has accepted like the success that she's had at this point, and probably this album was less her trying to win another Grammy and more like, "Here's all the things I've wanted to say but haven't put on albums before because they wouldn't win awards, or they wouldn't be the best songs. They wouldn't be chart-toppers."

'Cause I don't think she expected to win album of the year for *Midnight's* and be the first person ever to win it four time. But now that she's set that record and made history...

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: You know, now she can pretty much just be like, "Alright, well I'll do whatever I want."

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: "I'm gonna go write a song about football." [giggles]

Sydnee: Well, she doesn't seem like the kind of person who will ever stop though.

Raleigh: No.

Sydnee: But I don't know.

Raleigh: I agree.

Sydnee: You would know better than me. But you would know better.

Raleigh: Well, I mean she's talked before about how everything in her life she gets over by writing songs about it.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: Or gets through, so It's hard for me to think she only does it for money and that she'd stop doing it. But I don't know, maybe she'd stop putting them out. I don't know, I don't know. But thank you all for listening to all 31 songs, all two hours of them. [giggles]

Sydnee: No problem.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: *The Tortured Poets Department.*

Sydnee: No problem.

Raleigh: Syd, what's next?

Sydnee: [chuckles] Something completely different.

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: We've done music for a couple of weeks, I thought we should watch *Legends of the Hidden Temple*. [chuckles]

Taylor: Alright.

Sydnee: The old game show.

Raleigh: I'm excited.

Taylor: You're on a game show kick.

Raleigh & Sydnee: [simultaneously] Yeah.

Sydnee: I do like game shows.

Raleigh: Yeah. Well I—

Sydnee: I'm sure there are some episodes out there on YouTube. You can watch one or two and get the vibe.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Alright.

Sydnee: Alright, well thank you Raleigh. You can listen to all of *The Tortured Poets Department: The Anthology* lots of places. Everywhere.

Raleigh: Spotify.

Sydnee: It's everywhere. Yeah.

Raleigh: Apple Music. YouTube.

Taylor: You wanted to say, "Apple Music" so badly.

Sydnee: I know.

Raleigh: I know.

Sydnee: I know. That's where I listen— That is where I listen to it.

Taylor: [chuckles]

Raleigh: Of course.

Sydnee: Thank you listeners. You should go to maximumfun.org, check out a lot of great shows you would enjoy. Thank you to the Nouvellas for our theme song, Baby You Change Your Mind.

Raleigh: This has been your cross-generational guide to the culture that made us.

[theme music fades in]

Raleigh: I am Raleigh Smirl.

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Raleigh: I am still buffering.

Taylor & Sydnee: [simultaneously] [slowly] And I... Am... Too.

[theme music plays]

Raleigh: I feel like we forgot something.

Sydnee: I forgot our email.

Raleigh: Oh.

Sydnee: stillbuffering@maximumfun.org.

Raleigh: You got it.

Sydnee: That's what I forgot. I know— I knew it. Man, I've done that patter so many times, and then it just like whoosh. Went out of my head.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Gettin' old.

Taylor: Whoosh.

Sydnee: [chuckles]

Manolo Moreno: Hey, when you listen to podcasts, it really just comes down to whether or not you like the sound of everyone's voices. My voice is one of the sounds you'll hear on the podcast *Dr Gameshow*, and this is the voice of co-host and fearless leader, Jo Firestone.

Jo Firestone: This is a podcast where we play games submitted by listeners, and we play them with callers over Zoom we've never spoken to in our lives.

Manolo Moreno: [chuckles]

Jo Firestone: So that is basically the concept of the show. Pretty chill.

Manolo Moreno: So take it or leave it, bucko. And here's what some of the listeners have to say.

Caller One: It's funny, wholesome, and it never fails to make me smile.

Caller Two: I just started listening and I'm already binging it. I haven't laughed this hard in ages. I wish I had discovered it sooner.

Manolo Moreno: You can find *Dr Gameshow* in maximumfun.org

[ukulele chord]

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