

Wonderful! 340: A Finite Way With Words

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[theme music, "Money Won't Pay (feat. Augustus)" by Bo En plays]

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hi, this is Griffin McElroy!

Rachel: And this is Wonderful!

Griffin: Welcome to Wonderful! It's a show where we talk about things that's good, that we like, that we are into.

Rachel: So, you know what I noticed?

Griffin: What did you notice, my love?

Rachel: We're both wearing our Rehoboth gear right now.

Griffin: I gotta say, we had a day where I was wearing my Rehoboth gear, and both of our boys were wearing their Rehoboth T-shirts. And it made me think like, wow, that beach life, that Northeastern New England beach life really got into us.

Rachel: Yeah, we were only there for a few days. And the boys really like souvenirs. And honestly, I have a real soft spot for them too.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: So like literally hours before we went to bed to get up and leave, we stopped at a little store and just loaded up.

Griffin: Loaded up on Rehoboth gear. Now I feel like a real DC guy. I feel like a real mover and shaker.

Rachel: I know, right? I feel like I can look at people and just like, they look at my shirt and point to me, and I like do a little wink, and we're like, we're in it.

Griffin: And they're like, "I know where she summers."

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: And it's like, no, I mean, we went there—

Rachel: Can I tell you, it is such a relief. Like we don't traditionally put a lot of travel into our summer.

Griffin: True.

Rachel: Because our big trip tends to be on spring break. And then we do these little, tiny trips throughout the year when you're touring.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But now when people ask me, "Did you do anything fun this summer?" Which happens a lot, particularly among medical professionals.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: I can say, oh, we spent a long weekend in Rehoboth.

Griffin: And you know what? Rehoboth was recently in the news when Joe Biden got Covid. When he was sort of thinking about scootin'. And so now when I tell people that, they're like, "Oh, you went to Joe Biden's beach?" And it's like, yeah.

Rachel: Yeah, even eating some Thrasher's fries with Joe Biden.

Griffin: I had some Thrasher's fries with Joe Biden. And I gave him a talking to that I think really moved the needle. And so—

Rachel: Like, "It's time, Joe."

Griffin: You're freaking welcome, everyone.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: This wave of enthusiasm everyone's riding right now, that was me and Thrasher's fries, and Rachel, and Joe Biden at Rehoboth Beach Boardwalk. Everybody, we did it.

Rachel: Griffin was like, "I really think it's time for you to reconsider." And he's like, "But, but, but—" And then I just put my finger to his lips.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And I just said, "Shh."

Griffin: But then the Secret Service was like, "Hey, don't."

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Your fingers are—

Rachel: And then I put my finger to their lips too.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And then there was nobody left.

Griffin: There was no one left to silence her.

Rachel: It's kind of like a fable in a way. [titters]

Griffin: Yeah. The illness that I have now, I don't know if people can hear it in my voice, probably, it might be presidential Covid. I might have—I haven't taken a test or anything like that, but I'm just thinking about how we split fries with him and touched his mouth.

Rachel: You know it was months ago that we were there at this point, right?

Griffin: It was last month. It was this month! It was earlier this month.

Rachel: Was it really?

Griffin: Yeah, baby, it's still August.

Rachel: Ooh, boy.

Griffin: Anyway, we touched his—

Rachel: This is a long one, August.

Griffin: We touched his French fry greased mouth knowing he had whatever he had, and now I've got it too. And, gosh, it's premier luxury sickness! I feel so... I feel like a famous guy.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: Do you have a small wonder?

Rachel: Hm... I am gonna say that we have a friend living with us right now.

Griffin: We do.

Rachel: It was a situation where his fam was moving, and he had to stay for a few extra months to finish out his job. And so, we offered him a spot in our house. And it's been really nice, actually. Like the boys love him. He has two sons, and so he's very versed in, you know—

Griffin: Boy stuff.

Rachel: Boy stuff. And it's been really, it's—I don't know, it's kind of nice. I'll like look out and see his car on the road and I'll be like, oh, he's—

Griffin: Oh, he's home.

Rachel: He's down there.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: He's down there, just living his life. And we have a friend in our vicinity.

Griffin: Yeah, it's been really, really great. I'm gonna say, Henry got sort of into Animal Crossing a little while ago. And it's been fun, we've played it together a little bit. It's like crazy going back to this island that I spent so much time on, back in the like Covid shutdown times. And seeing like, wow, I put a lot of work into this. It's wild how much time and energy I had to put into this virtual island. The other thing he's gotten into is the Lego sets, the Animal Crossing Lego sets—

Rachel: Wait, can I go back to the playing Animal Crossing?

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Rachel: One of the things I really loved about Henry is that early on in the game, he decided he was going to collect all the gyroids.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And then he set them up in his room in like a semi-circle, and they all like sing together.

Griffin: Uh-huh.

Rachel: And it's just the best.

Griffin: He's really, really into gyroids.

Rachel: I love that.

Griffin: I do too.

Rachel: All right, Lego set.

Griffin: So yeah, we've picked up a bunch of the Lego sets now because he also really likes Lego. And they're so darling. It's so charming to make a little tiny Animal Crossing house, a little tiny milk stop.

Rachel: They are very cute. Griffin just invested in a significant one.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And I looked at him and I was like, you know how much that was, right?

Griffin: It was \$80.

Rachel: And you challenged me with your eyes. Like, "Are you gonna say something? Are you gonna say something about this Lego set?"

Griffin: Well, it's the town hall, and it comes with K.K. Slider. That's like his fuckin' number one dude.

Rachel: Town Hall is probably like \$15, but K.K. Slider, he's like \$60.

Griffin: He demands a premium.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah. I go first this week!

Rachel: Okay?

Griffin: I would like to talk to you about a very special West Virginia-based holiday.

Rachel: Oh?

Griffin: Did you watch the video I sent you?

Rachel: I did. I didn't realize it was a West Virginia-based holiday?

Griffin: So this is a West Virginia-based holiday. To set it up, West Virginia has an abundance of beautiful, natural scenery. But the place that people like usually talk about as sort of representing the state's natural beauty is the New River Gorge. The New River is one of the world's oldest rivers. It stems from the Blue Ridge Mountains and sort of winds through the supple hills of southeastern West Virginia.

And right sort of in the heart of its 320-mile run in Fayetteville, West Virginia, there is the New River Gorge National Park and Reserve. Absolutely gorgeous. I went white water rafting on the New River Gorge once, and it was one of the... one of the most memorable experiences of my entire life. Partially because like I got to see a side of West Virginia that I had never ever seen before.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: But also, because I didn't put any sunscreen on my legs, which I then propped up on like an inflatable kayak. And I got the worst sunburn I've ever got my entire life.

Rachel: West Virginia is like super gorgeous. And I never would have probably known that if I hadn't met you.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Because it's not like a destination that a lot of people seek out, unless you're like a super-outdoorsy person.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: And then you know like how gorgeous it is.

Griffin: The highlight of the New River Gorge is the New River Gorge Bridge. It is this massive steel arch bridge, single-span bridge. It's over 3000 feet long. It's the largest single-span bridge in the Western Hemisphere.

Rachel: Have we been over this guy?

Griffin: Have we? No, I don't think so.

Rachel: Oh, okay, I didn't know where it was.

Griffin: I can't think of any reason why we would be down in Fayetteville. It passes over the New River below at a height of 876 feet, which also makes it one of the like highest vehicular bridges in the world. It's like disorienting to be on. And it's a highway. There's no like pedestrian footpath. It's just like a four lane highway, gigantic steel bridge going over the New River. It is this wild feat of engineering. A single-span bridge basically means that there is no central structural support going down into the river. It just like, there's an arch and it connects at both ends of the valley.

But there's nothing else like going down. It is a wild feat of engineering parked right in the middle of this like lush, foggy valley. It's just one of the most gorgeous places I've ever seen. So, we got this bridge. It's really high up. So naturally, people are going to want to base jump off this thing. Totally normal impulse. The two problems with that though are, one, there's no pedestrian foot traffic whatsoever. It's a fuckin' highway. You can't just walk in the middle of the road. But the other thing is that there is a nationwide ban on base jumping within national parks, where this bridge exists.

Rachel: Oh? I mean, that makes sense. It's a very dangerous activity.

Griffin: Yes. So, this bridge was completed in 1977, and just two years later, there was a guy named Burton Ervin. Burton Ervin, really fucking phonetically pleasing name.

Rachel: Oh my god, yes.

Griffin: He's an Army veteran. He parachuted from the bridge on August 17th, 1979. And had 200 people sort of watching him. It was late at night, it was like 10 o'clock at night, and he had this crowd assembled. And I'm guessing those 200 people who assembled to watch Burton Ervin jump off the New River Gorge Bridge thought it was the coolest thing they'd ever seen. Because—

Rachel: They just all elbowed each other and were like, "I could do that."
[chuckles]

Griffin: Or like, "I'm gonna tell all my friends about this."

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Because that jump was sort of what is credited as establishing the New River Gorge Bridge as like a must-visit base jumping destination. So Burton Ervin is considered to be like the grandfather of Bridge Day. People keep doing this, people keep jumping off of the bridge. So eventually, maybe just to sort of like minimize potential harm and traffic disruption, the Park Service and this special commission establishes a day where the bridge would be closed to cars and open to foot traffic, and the—

Rachel: Ah, I love that.

Griffin: And the ban on base jumping would be temporarily lifted. And so, on—still today, on the third Saturday of every October, they do Bridge Day.

Rachel: Ooh.

Griffin: From nine AM to three PM.

Rachel: Oh, what a pretty time of year to do it.

Griffin: Oh my god, it's fucking gorgeous.

Rachel: The leaves?

Griffin: The foliage is so on point. The spot is already like absolutely beautiful. But when you're diving down in between, you know, into this big valley of yellow and orange and red leaves, oh my god, it's unbelievably beautiful.

Rachel: So this is where you went whitewater rafting?

Griffin: I did not go during Bridge Day.

Rachel: Well, no. [chuckles]

Griffin: No.

Rachel: But like this—

Griffin: But I did go. Yes, I did the—I can't remember if it was the upper New or the lower New. But I did go on the—I did see the bridge while we were on our trek, so I'm not sure which leg of the New River I did.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: So, yeah, every year, thousands of people congregate on this bridge.

Rachel: I love that.

Griffin: They shut down automotive traffic like well out so that people can just like park on the side of the highway. And thousands of people come to this to watch about—usually about 400 base jumpers leap off of the New River Gorge Bridge.

Rachel: Wow.

Griffin: And parachute down. They have little boats, like patrol boats in the water, sort of pulling people—

Rachel: Good. That's what I was hoping. I was like, I hope they didn't just shut the bridge down and they were like, "Good luck!" [chuckles]

Griffin: No, there's like a little landing spot on like the banks of the river. But then they have like boats that are patrolling the waters in case someone doesn't do so good of a job landing. There have been a few, let's call them incidents in the you know, 50 years almost that they've been doing this event. Which is understandable, but they have taken several precautions. But not like... this is what I love about Bridge Day, not too many precautions.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: The video I sent you, they had a catapult on the bridge. Where someone would sit in this catapult and would be fucking catapulted over the side of the bridge, to like pull the parachute—so it's definitely dumb stunts, right?

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Like, it's not a safe thing to do.

Rachel: Yeah, we're not encouraging people to participate in this.

Griffin: Well, no, because it is actually really tough to qualify. You have to be registered—

Rachel: Ah, okay?

Griffin: In order to do it. And I will get into that a bit later. So yeah, they have about 400 base jumpers. They have repellers. You can repel down from the bridge. They've done a few bungee jumping things. I don't know if that is like an every year deal. And then they have boats in the water. They have like highway patrol units sort of posted up at either end of the bridge. But there's all kinds of rules and regulations you have to follow in order to jump. One big thing, you can't have any alcohol on the bridge during Bridge Day. Which is probably good.

Rachel: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Griffin: Probably a good thing. But in order to qualify, you have to register with the New River Gorge Bridge Day Commission. You can only jump if you're at least 18 years old, if you've done a parachute jump sometime in the last two years, and you have to have at least 100 parachute jumps under your belt so far.

Rachel: Whoa!

Griffin: So they go to pretty great lengths to make sure that this is not your first rodeo. Because it is—it is a—you know, it's base jumping, right? Like the margin of error is pretty fuckin' thin. So, not everybody gets to do it. But a lot of people come from like well out of state to come and do this special event. Because it is something of a—something of a destination for for base jumpers. It just like, it encapsulates so much of what I love about West Virginia, right?

Like the scenery of that area, of the whole New River Gorge area, is so otherworldly gorgeous. It was like a huge inspiration for why I wanted to do a season of Adventure Zone set in basically that area, in the Monongahela. Which is a little bit more east of where the New River Gorge Bridge is. But like it's just hills and trees as far as the eye can see, and it's so, so, so, so beautiful. But also like you know, you have this remarkable feat of engineering, and then you have like this undeniable impulse of seeing like a big, beautiful bridge and thinking like, "I could jump off—I could do a stunt off that."

Rachel: [chuckles] Yeah.

Griffin: There is a certain amount of recklessness that I think I associate with West Virginia. Like there is a... I don't know, this starts to get into kind of treacherous waters. But like this fearlessness, I guess, that is kind of part and parcel with—

Rachel: Well, it's wild, wonderful West Virginia, right?

Griffin: It is wild and wonderful West Virginia. There is a whole conversation to be had, and I'm not at all interested in like sort of wandering into the fucking like Hillbilly Elegy bullshit. But of people who like have gotten the short shrift, and therefore have become more fearless as a result of that, right?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Like, this crystallizes that idea into a fucking incredibly cool sort of single moment. And like lots and lots of people come out for it, it is such a big deal in the state, and especially that part of the state. I've never actually

gone to Bridge Day, right? Because it's only one day, and it's not that close to Huntington. It would be a bit of a trek to get out there. But I've always—

Rachel: Well, your family probably didn't want you getting any ideas.
[chuckles]

Griffin: Well, yeah, I mean, I would have to... In order to jump off the bridge, I would have to undergo some pretty dramatic life changes.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: I would have to change some pretty fundamental stuff about who I am.

Rachel: 100 jumps prior, like—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like that takes years, I'm guessing.

Griffin: Or like, you know, if you find a spot and you can do like five jumps a day for 20 days.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Just like bang 'em out, you know?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I don't know like how long does it take you to jam your parachute back in your backpack?

Rachel: Like a week. [chuckles]

Griffin: It seems like it would take a long fucking time. Anyway, that's Bridge Day. It is a very special West Virginia-based thing that I think is so rad. And I would *love* to make a pilgrimage out there for it some year. Because it's honestly probably not crazy. It would probably take us a little

bit shorter than it would take us to get to Huntington, if we ever wanted to pull the trigger on it. But that's Bridge Day! Can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yes.

[theme music plays]

[ad break]

Rachel: Okay, my thing this week—

Griffin: Yes!

Rachel: Is related to one of my favorite things, which you know is Scrabble.

Griffin: Oh, sure.

Rachel: It's like the only game that I played every day for like, I don't know, a decade maybe?

Griffin: I mean, you play Words with Friends, which is basically Scrabble.

Rachel: Yeah, yeah.

Griffin: Why don't they not just call that Scrabble? It's crazy that Scrabble hasn't bought that up.

Rachel: Yeah, I don't know. They probably... I mean, it's probably a little bit trickier than just like calling up the Scrabble people and being like, "Hey, you want this?"

Griffin: Yeah, no, I assume it would be a little bit trickier than calling up the Scrabble people and saying, "Do you want this?"

Rachel: Mm-hm. I mean, if you want to call up the Scrabble people, go ahead.

Griffin: I'll call up the Scrabble guys. Who's that, Milton Bradley?

Rachel: Hm... Well, I think at this point it's his youngest, youngest, youngest grandchild, who is Merv Bradley.

Griffin: Merv Bradley?

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: Okay, I'll call up Merv.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Hit him up.

Rachel: I don't want to purchase Word with Friends, though. Are you just calling him up to check in?

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: See...

Griffin: Just see what he's up to, what's coming down the pipe. Monopoly 2!

Rachel: There is actually a new kind of Scrabble. This isn't what I'm talking about.

Griffin: Oh, shit?

Rachel: But there's like a less competitive Scrabble that is out in response to I guess some Gen Z desire to have a Scrabble that is more collaborative.

Griffin: What?

Rachel: It's called Scrabble Together.

Griffin: Oh, come on!

Rachel: And it moves from competition to collaborative, so you all like kind of work together on the board. And it's less about getting the most points.

Griffin: I mean, I'm sure that would be fun. But also, Scrabble is the most cutthroat game.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And so like, it seems like you lose a lot of the spirit of the thing.

Rachel: Yeah. Although collaborative games are usually pretty fun. So I don't know—

Griffin: I do like a collaborative game.

Rachel: Maybe that one's good.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: That is not what I—I'm not here to talk about Scrabble as a whole. I'm here to talk about the two-letter word that you can really capitalize on in Scrabble.

Griffin: Okay, very specific.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: I'm here for it.

Rachel: Mm-hm. So one thing, if you play Scrabble all the time, a lot of your gameplay will involve two letter words. Because sometimes you look at your set of tiles and you don't have anything.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: And the board is hostile and you need something. And the two-letter word really, really comes in clutch.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: So, I wanted to talk about some of those two letter words.

Griffin: How many are there? Do you have like a number of how many acceptable two letter words there are in—

Rachel: I don't. I will say there is a Mental Floss article from 2023 that lists 22 two letter words to boost your Scrabble score. I don't know if it's comprehensive.

Griffin: Yeah, no, probably not. I could probably come up with 22. At least 22 two letter words just off the top of my head.

Rachel: Whoa?

Griffin: To, am, be, do, hi. That was really quick.

Rachel: [laughs] The one that got me thinking about this is QI.

Griffin: Ki!

Rachel: Which is actually qi (chi).

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: The vital life force inherent to all things in Chinese philosophy.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: And QI is amazing.

Griffin: Oh, my God. It's what, 11 points?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: And—or is it 12? I think it's 11. I think you're right. But you know, Q needs a U.

Griffin: Q almost always needs a U.

Rachel: Yeah, almost every time. And to have that option is tremendous.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like usually getting a Q was like a death sentence, until you were like, oh, I can just put it next to I.

Griffin: There's not another two letter Q word, right? I can't think of any.

Rachel: No, I don't think so.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Yeah, when I first started playing like in high school, and this is, you know, god, 20 plus years ago, when like you would literally have a dictionary. Like you didn't have a smartphone. I was really bad with two letter words because of course I just like didn't inherently know any. But now, I mean, one of the nice things about playing online is it will tell you whether or not it's a word before you place it.

Griffin: Yeah. That's always such a wonderful moment when you're like throwing a bunch of garbage in, and then it's like... and yeah, that's acceptable. And it's like, wow, really? Q, P, R, X, S, one? There's a number in there, are you sure?

Rachel: Qwerty is one, by the way.

Griffin: Qwerty can't be one.

Rachel: It is!

Griffin: How is that a word? Like, it's a mnemonic device for remembering the I guess orientation of keyboard keys.

Rachel: Okay, so it is a keyboard layout for Latin script alphabets. So it's like—

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: You know, it's like a thing that is used by keyboards.

Griffin: I guess that makes sense. I've never thought of it as a word, but that's fine.

Rachel: Okay, ai is one, but it is a species of three toed sloth.

Griffin: Yeah, I was gonna say, that's—acronyms are not—

Rachel: Yeah, it's not—yeah, it's not an acronym—

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: In this case.

Griffin: I—okay, I've heard of like an II?

Rachel: Yeah? What is that?

Griffin: That's like a sloth deal.

Rachel: Oh?

Griffin: With like big eyes I think.

Rachel: It sounds like a Star Wars thing.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: [chuckles] BA is an old dialect word meaning to kiss.

Griffin: Ba?

Rachel: Uh-huh. But among Egyptologists, it is also the name given to a person's immortal soul.

Griffin: Whoa.

Rachel: How cool are these two letter words?

Griffin: They're really cool. Can I get a ba over here though? What's up? Can I have a little [smacks lips], a little ba? [smacks lips] Ba!

Rachel: You're not going to take that outside of this room, are you?

Griffin: Kind of little ba! [smacks lips] Do you not want me to do? Do you not like that?

Rachel: ET—

Griffin: Et!

Rachel: Is a dialect spelling of eight.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Rachel: How great is that?

Griffin: That's very Appalachian, I feel.

Rachel: Yeah, although, I don't know. Well, I remember my grandma used to use that. And she's not Appalachian, but like—

Griffin: No, not at all.

Rachel: Yeah. Hm, HM, which can also be spelled, HMM.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: Which, you know, hm.

Griffin: Hm.

Rachel: Hm.

Griffin: That's crazy, because that one don't got a vowel in it.

Rachel: I know! SH is one too.

Griffin: I guess like there's some of these where they—I would not assume that the two-letter version of it is the accepted spelling or the accepted version. So like SH does not feel right to me. Because if you were to tell someone, "Shh!" I would not put just SH, I would usually put like several Hs after.

Rachel: I know, I know.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: One of my other favorites is XU. Which is a Greek letter.

Griffin: Zoo? Is it pronounced zoo?

Rachel: Sue.

Griffin: Sue?

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Monetary unit of Vietnam equal to 100th of a dong.

Griffin: Oh, okay.

Rachel: Yeah, XU is great because you wouldn't think there would be any two word or two letter words that start with X.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And EX is of course one, and AX and OX. But you only got a U, you're set.

Griffin: So, with the two letter words, unless I'm mistaken, the most common application for them is when you put down a line of letters or spell a word out—

Rachel: Right next to another.

Griffin: Basically parallel to another word.

Rachel: If you've got like two vertical lines and you can do like AB and like BA. And... you know.

Griffin: That is honestly why I stopped playing Scrabble.

Rachel: [chortles]

Griffin: Is like, I feel like I—it took me so long to do a turn, right? Because it's like, I look at my tiles and I think like, yeah, I could just spell like... potato. But is there an opportunity here for me to make a billion-trillion fucking points by—

Rachel: I will say, I had a friend in high school that was really good at that like pairing vertical columns of words. I was always—like really struggled with it. Until everything went online.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And it would, you know, tell me whether or not I had an actual word in front of me.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And it also keeps the game interesting for me. Like, if it was really just putting word—like the longest word you can down over and over again, I feel like I wouldn't still be playing it.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Rachel: It's like the strategy of like finding the triple letter score and then putting your X there.

Griffin: Yeah, it makes sense.

Rachel: Another favorite is za.

Griffin: ZA?

Rachel: Which is just a slang abbreviation of pizza. [chuckles]

Griffin: Is this from like the official Scrabble dictionary or something?

Rachel: Yes, this is—so in North America, all the words that are officially acceptable in a game of Scrabble are listed on the TWL, or official Tournament Word List. And the rest of the English-speaking world, including in the UK and Australia, Scrabble players use the so-called SOWPODS list. Which is the Scrabble players dictionary and the official words list produced by the Chambers Dictionary.

Griffin: Okay, that's a lot of shit.

Rachel: It's a lot of information. Yeah, I don't know, I guess I brought that because I feel like if you have left Scrabble—

Griffin: Yeah, and I have.

Rachel: And you were thinking, what does Scrabble have left for me?

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Two letter words opens up—

Griffin: Blows the whole thing wide open.

Rachel: It's just a whole—it's just a whole new option for you.

Griffin: Is the practice here do you think like really sitting down and learning these two letter words? Like really sitting down with this list of two letter words and like trying to internalize them in a way where you could maybe start employing them while—

Rachel: I mean, I'm sure. I'm sure some people do that. And especially if you're playing like the physical version, like and you aren't at the like advantage of a computer, like I would get it. I never like memorized them.

Griffin: You know what would be tight? You know how they have like ChessUp and like those like chess boards that are like connected to the computer and they got AI brains in 'em and stuff? And it shows you like when you touch a chess piece, like what the legal moves are. What if there was a Scrabble board that could like detect the tiles you put on it, and then it would like you know, flash green if it was like an acceptable word? Or like blink red if it was not.

Rachel: Oh?

Griffin: Wouldn't that be so sick?

Rachel: That would be.

Griffin: I bet you that's gonna happen.

Rachel: You think so?

Griffin: I think so! I think so! I don't see why that's not possible. It's just—

Rachel: I mean, yeah, I guess if they have it for chess?

Griffin: Why not do it for Scrabble?

Rachel: But with chess, there's like a finite number of moves, right? I guess there is too with words.

Griffin: With words, yeah.

Rachel: But you'd have to update it. You'd have to like download the update all the time, because they're always adding new stuff. Yeet is now an option.

Griffin: Yeet is, of course, an option, yeah.

Rachel: Yeah. Yeah, so this, I don't know, hopefully this is interesting to other people.

Griffin: It is, it is.

Rachel: I found it... I don't know—

Griffin: The idea of it being this secret upper echelon of Scrabble strategy that—for real gamers, I find intoxicating.

Rachel: [chuckles] I will say, you know what letter doesn't have a two-letter word attached to it?

Griffin: What?

Rachel: C.

Griffin: I was just thinking that.

Rachel: Yeah. If you have a C, you have to have at least like three letters or you're getting nowhere.

Griffin: What about coo? Co?

Rachel: No. That's an abbreviation.

Griffin: Tch!

Rachel: Maybe, you know what? This is what—this is what my goal is now, I guess, is to invent a kind of slang that gives me a two letter—a two letter C word.

Griffin: Ct! That's like cat, but it's slang. It's Appalachian slang for cat. You just say ct!

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: Ct! Hey, do you want to know what our friends at home are talking about?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Jody says, "My small wonder is the pet wall in my office. Everyone has stuck up photos of their pets on the wall by the kitchen, and it makes me smile every time I walk past and see the guinea pig family next to the dogs, cats, lizards, the crocheted toy budgies, and even one slug. It means I don't miss my dogs as much when I'm in the office." They sent some pictures, it's a big—it's a lot of animals.

Rachel: That's cute.

Griffin: I don't know where they work. I imagine there's lots of people who work there. Because there's hundreds of pictures of animals on this wall.

Rachel: That's such a clever way to start a conversation too.

Griffin: Yeah, of course.

Rachel: Instead of like walking by somebody's desk and seeing their like little moon rock, you can just go in this room and be like, "Oh, look at—is that your cute dog?"

Griffin: I have to imagine the conversation that usually springboards off that is like, "Okay, who has a slug? Who's got the slug?"

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: A beautiful slug, it's like a bright cherry red slug. I've never seen a slug like that before. David says, "My small wonder is seagulls. Sure, they're easy to hate on. But if every seagull disappeared tomorrow, everyone would be like, 'Damn, I miss those guys.'"

Rachel: [snickers]

Griffin: Also, I've heard them called dump eagles before, and I think that's pretty rad.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Speaking of Rehoboth Beach, lousy, *lousy* with seagulls.

Rachel: Yeah, it takes some adjustment, for sure.

Griffin: Literally walking down the boardwalk with Joe Biden and my bag of Thrasher's fries, they just swipe down and tried to lacerate the bag with their sharp beaks—

Rachel: Yeah, I specifically did not want our children holding food. Because I thought that would be traumatic, if they had a seagull come down and just like pull something out of their mouth?

Griffin: Yeah, god, and they would too. But I do love it also. Like it's hard to not look at 'em and be like, you rascal little scamps.

Rachel: And Rehoboth really leans into it. Like they act like it's not an accident that they have an enormous amount of seagulls. They're like, "This is our thing, is the seagulls."

Griffin: A lot of seagull-based merch.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I think that's it. 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 out all the great shows that they have over there. And just vibe on it. Please? We got some new merch over in the merch store.

Rachel: And you're gonna be doing shows this week.

Griffin: Yes, if I may talk about the merch for a moment. There's a Munch Squad apron.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: There is also a Grillmaster of the Forbidden Meats apron, inspired by my character from The Adventure Zone: Dadlands. That is one of my favorite things we've put up in a long time. That's all over at mcelroymerch.com. And we also have some shows coming up. I think in the next... what day does this show come out? Wednesdays?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Yes, if you live in Portland, we're in Portland this week doing MBMBaM and TAZ at Rose City Comic Con, I believe on Friday and Saturday, come see us for that. We got some more shows coming up later in the year, in Orlando and Atlanta and Indianapolis, and I think like Phoenix and Denver. A bunch of places. If you go to bit.ly/mcelroytours, you can find tickets and information about all those shows. You can come and see us, and it'll kick so much ass. I think that'll do it for this one, though. Time to pack it in. We're gonna strike the set now.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: Every—

Rachel: And you're gonna drink a whole gallon of honey.

Griffin: I'm going to drink a lot of honey, just to sort of step into my Winnie the Pooh power.

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: I think it's long overdue.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: I'm gonna take off all my bottom clothes.

Rachel: Yeah, I would like it if you stop wearing pants.

Griffin: And if my shirt became sort of a crop top situation.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: And I would just be like, [spoofs Winnie the Pooh] "Oh, bother..."

Rachel: Not that bad.

Griffin: It's not great. I'll need to practice.

Rachel: [chuckles]

[theme music, "Money Won't Pay (feat. Augustus)" by Bo En plays]

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