

Wonderful! 360: Ashes to Ashes, Pipes to Tubes

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

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hello, this is Griffin McElroy!

Rachel: And this is Wonderful!

Griffin: Thank you for listening to Wonderful! It's a show where we talk about things we like, that's good, that we're into. Used to be a show about Bachelor. Now it's not. So deal with it.

Rachel: Wow. That has been true for a very long time. [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah, I don't know why it's stuck in my... stuck in my craw today. I mean, it's probably because we did watch The Bachelor last night, episode one.

Rachel: Yeah. Every once in a while, we dip back in to see—

Griffin: Gotta dip the toe in a little bit.

Rachel: Is it something different? Is it better than before? And usually the answer is no.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: As Max Fun donors know, we did watch Joey's season...

Griffin: And we watched that golden shit, with all the old people.

Rachel: Yeah, and we watched the golden one. We enjoyed both of those.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: This one looks a little bit like more of the same, but who knows?

Griffin: Right over the plate. Doesn't look like there's a ton—get this, and you guys aren't gonna fuckin' believe this, but it looks like when the Bachelor gets to the end of the romance journey—

Rachel: [chuckles] Uh-huh?

Griffin: They have a—it looks—and again, like all we have is the season preview at the end of the premiere. But it looks like he's gonna have a really hard time deciding between the two final women.

Rachel: Yeah, they always—

Griffin: Isn't that crazy?

Rachel: They always tease the like end of the season now. Because there was one season when it was like a really dramatic ending, as you may recall.

Griffin: I think it was Ben? One of the Bens? It was like, I can't, I—it was the first time they said I love—

Rachel: The woman found out. You remember?

Griffin: Yes?

Rachel: It was a season we watched. Was it Joey's season?

Griffin: Man, I don't know—well, yes, there's that.

Rachel: The women found out and—

Griffin: That was Joey's season.

Rachel: And preemptively shut it down.

Griffin: I'm talking about we were watching the show when it happened that the guy said I love you to two different women. Which had never happened before.

Rachel: Oh, yeah.

Griffin: And now it happens every season! And it sure looks like it's gonna happen again this time!

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I don't know, man.

Rachel: What is love, though, really? You know? I love a lot of people.

Griffin: Wait, what?

Rachel: Not in the same way I love you, my husband.

Griffin: [gasps] Hah...

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Anyway, I don't know what got me talking about that. Do you have any small wonders?

Rachel: Oh, I was thinking about this yesterday that I was gonna make it a small wonder.

Griffin: Okay?

Rachel: I do this thing in our family where I like to put my cheek against the other person's cheek.

Griffin: It's good.

Rachel: I do that with everybody basically in the house, because it does—like it really sends like endorphins or serotonin or something. There's

something about the skin to skin, particularly face to face, that really does nice things for me.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And now it's just a thing that happens all the time, and I really enjoy it.

Griffin: I remember learning that cats do that, and they have some sort of gland in their cheek—

Rachel: Oh, the—yeah.

Griffin: That puts the smell on them—on you to know—

Rachel: Yeah. [titters] Is that what I'm doing?

Griffin: It might be.

Rachel: [chuckles] I'm tagging you of you?

Griffin: It might be. I always do enjoy that.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I mean, for intimate... purposes. But also for utilitarian purposes. Because you're always quite warm.

Rachel: That's true.

Griffin: And I'm quite cold.

Rachel: That's true, I'm a real Dharma.

Griffin: You...

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: We've been arguing about—we've been hitting this conversation a lot lately.

Rachel: Who would be warmer? Or—

Griffin: I mean, clearly, Greg would be the cold one.

Rachel: [titters] Uh-huh.

Griffin: Just because that's kind of like, it resembles his personality. But small wonder, Severance season two is out and it's good as hell. I'm not gonna say anything about the plot or spoilies.

Rachel: Yeah, we're—we've seen the first two episodes.

Griffin: It's all this out.

Rachel: And it does everything we want it to do.

Griffin: It's so good, y'all! Season one is such a huge... takes such a huge swing at the very end.

Rachel: There's a big cliffhanger. And you worry, kind of, with these artsy shows that they are going to make no efforts to like pick up anything. But they definitely do.

Griffin: They frickin do, and they—

Rachel: It's very satisfying.

Griffin: And it's real good! Real good TV. I would say we... we're on tinter hooks now for that and Traders. Traders season three.

Rachel: [chuckles] [in a Southern accent] Traders.

Griffin: [in a Southern accent] 'Traders.' We're watching that one, enjoy it too. Not a glut of television on right now, but you know... that always

happens this time of year. So I'm grateful for Severance. You go first this week!

Rachel: I actually got to print out my topic.

Griffin: Look at you!

Rachel: Like the old days. You remember I used to do this?

Griffin: You look like fuckin' Indiana Jones right now with a map.

Rachel: [chuckles] I used to prep at my office, and I would print out my topic.

Griffin: Okay?

Rachel: But lately, we've been recording on a Friday and I'm not in the office.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: But today we're late. Anyway, I got to print out my topic on one satisfying piece of paper.

Griffin: Beautiful, what is it?

Rachel: My topic is borosilicate glass. Otherwise known as Pyrex.

Griffin: All right... all right?

Rachel: I didn't want to come out and like say like I'm a Pyrex Stan until I die.

Griffin: Because that's like a brand, right?

Rachel: Yes. Although like they're the ones that started the whole show.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: But I mean, the thing I like really, honestly, is a glass jar that you can put in the microwave or in the oven.

Griffin: A microwave-safe glass is like literally all you gotta say, and I'm sold. I'm here. Yeah.

Rachel: Okay. [chuckles] There's kind of an interesting history about it.

Griffin: You're gonna have to do some real convincing—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: For me to buy that.

Rachel: Well, if you think about it—so, it's been around forever. The idea of like relatively indestructible glass has been around since the 1880s. There is a German scientist, Otto Schott, who developed what's called a low expansion glass used for industrial and scientific settings, like laboratory glass.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: Or like glass beakers. And then in—

Griffin: But then he put spaghetti in one of those one time and was like, "Oh, dang!"

Rachel: [chuckles] That's actually very similar to what the story is.

Griffin: Oh, good.

Rachel: So in 1908, Corning Glass Works in Corning, New York—do you know Corningware? It's like the white, like ceramic casserole dish that has the little blue flower pattern on the front.

Griffin: Sure, yeah.

Rachel: So they're the ones that made that. But it came about because a scientist at Corning, they had been using it for battery jars and railroad lanterns.

Griffin: I don't think I know what a battery jar is.

Rachel: I don't know what that means either. I'm assuming that, you know, I don't know, in like old machinery, batteries were encased in glass of some kind?

Griffin: Cool.

Rachel: I don't know. I don't know.

Griffin: I like that.

Rachel: I might look into that. Anyway, they had been using it for those purposes. But ironically, it was so strong, it was never getting replaced. And so they needed some other use for it.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Rachel: A scientist at Corning named Jesse Littleton was married to a woman named Bessie, who had her earthenware dish crack in her oven, and asked him to bring home a battery jar. And so she made a cake in it, and the jar stayed intact. Which, big gamble, right?

Griffin: Sure, yeah.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I mean, for the cake, for the oven.

Rachel: And then in 1915, Corning Glass launched their first Pyrex line. And what's interesting is, so Pyrex, there are two different schools of thought. So this glass was called Nonex at first.

Griffin: Whoa.

Rachel: And that was what it was called when it was used for battery jars and railroad lanterns. Pyrex came about, and either it was named as a combination of pie and Nonex. Because like pie container.

Griffin: Because you use it to make a pie?

Rachel: Pie tin, whatever.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Or the one that I like more is that they're playing on the prefix pyro.

Griffin: So it's like fire glass.

Rachel: Yeah. Since they had used X in all their glass formulas, they combined them together.

Griffin: Okay. I'm into it.

Rachel: Because the early advertising called it fire glass.

Griffin: Okay. So that's cool. I mean... cooler.

Rachel: And what a cool like sales pitch, right? Like, "We made this special fire glass." It sounds like an Avengers thing.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: You know, like an Iron Man like fire glass.

Griffin: Technically, all glass is fire glass.

Rachel: Mm-hm! I see what you're saying.

Griffin: Because it had to go through the crucible at some point in order to—

Rachel: True. But most glass you can't expose to heat and then cold and have it survive.

Griffin: That's true.

Rachel: So, okay, okay. So we're at 1915. Pyrex now is in like 80% of United States homes. And one of the things they talk about in this article—so I got information from both Food and Wine and Smithsonian. They talk about the eight-ounce measuring cup. We have one of these.

Griffin: Oh my god, yeah.

Rachel: Like, everybody has these. They're like these glass measuring cups. They have the little hook handle and the little red measurements.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: There's like a whole history associated with that. Basically, the handle of the measuring cup used to be like a regular coffee cup handle. But then they detached it at the end so it could stack, like in anything.

Griffin: Oh, wow? Okay.

Rachel: So this idea that you could like stack all your bowls and then like put the measuring cup—

Griffin: I've never done that even once.

Rachel: Oh, I definitely have.

Griffin: Stacked the measuring cup into the bowls?

Rachel: Yeah, yeah.

Griffin: It seems like a good way to have a tumble? Have a tumble come out of the—have the thing tumble out and smash—

Rachel: Well, I'm talking about when I store it. And all of our drawers are like knee level. So I'm not gonna like—

Griffin: I guess that's—I guess that's—

Rachel: Pull it onto my head.

Griffin: We also—

Rachel: And also, it wouldn't break! What are you worried about?

Griffin: I do have to say, I do prefer the OXO Good Grips two cup measuring—

Rachel: Oh! Just because it's bigger?

Griffin: Bigger—

Rachel: Lighter?

Griffin: Easier to read from up high. I'm a tall man and I need to read my measuring cup quickly and from up high. Without having to fuckin' get down like I'm Walter White, like trying to fuckin' like exactly level out my measurements.

Rachel: I think bakers... bakers would argue that like you should always get low. Because you're supposed to see... make sure there's no rounded top.

Griffin: With the OXO Good Grips two cup measuring cup, it has that sloped measuring... vertex.

Rachel: That's very true. I didn't know this is going to be a brand battle between the two of us?

Griffin: Well, it's funny, because my topic this week is the OXO Good Grips two cup measuring cup.

Rachel: [chuckles] Okay, so early Pyrex dishes, the casserole dish I mentioned, the pie I mentioned. Custard cups, loaf pans, oval baking dishes, cut-glass tea pots and engraved dishes.

Griffin: They must have been so stoked. Can you imagine—

Rachel: Right?

Griffin: If you discovered a new kind of glass and you're like, "I guess we'll use it for cooking stuff." What kind of cooking stuff is there? All of—a million different kinds. So many different kinds of cooking stuff. Congratulations, you're so rich now because there are so many different kinds of cooking stuff.

Rachel: Yeah, well, and especially for a company that's like, "We're not selling anything anymore because nothing breaks."

Griffin: Because these greedy scientists aren't buying our incredible glasses.

Rachel: With their lanterns. [chuckles]

Griffin: Their freaking battery jars.

Rachel: Okay, so all of this is happening like early 1900s. After World War I, Corning started hiring women who were getting degrees in home economics. Like after World War I, like women are going to college, a lot more of them are majoring in home economics.

Griffin: Okay?

Rachel: Pyrex started hiring them. And they hired a full-time scientist/home economist named Lucy Malte, which she established a test kitchen. And she would read all these letters from like customers, and she would test out all these projects. And she made some like key adjustments, including two cake pans that could fit side by side in an oven.

Griffin: That's huge.

Rachel: This is like the obvious stuff that like, you know, if you're not actually using it, you're probably not thinking about. Also, handles on a cake pan.

Griffin: Like the littles—oh, you got—I love those.

Rachel: Isn't that crazy to think that you wouldn't have a handle—

Griffin: How did you pick it up before?

Rachel: You probably just like—or like, you know, like a little cat with your—

Griffin: You put your hand into the casserole.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Put another hand on the bottom of the casserole, and pick it up like that?

Rachel: Or you do what I do sometimes with like the oven mitts, where you're kind of like, you're getting in on the lid and you're kind of poking it towards you, and you're trying to like shimmy it.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. How many burns have you gotten?

Rachel: [laughs] So many.

Griffin: So many burns. Rachel will sometimes just like roll into the living room with a big burn on her arm like, yeah—

Rachel: That's the toaster oven's fault, though.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: The toaster oven door comes down. I like to jostle stuff around in there while it's cooking. And I don't want to go *all the way* to get the over—

Griffin: For sure. But I mean, it's a real—it's like an Arrested Development corn baller level—

Rachel: [chortles] That's very—

Griffin: I think you just play it fast and loose with the rules and cooking safety.

Rachel: Okay, so I will say there's something that we missed entirely. It was on the market only 'til 1979.

Griffin: What's that?

Rachel: And this was stove top pans called Flameware, which were like glass Pyrex frying pans.

Griffin: That seems wrong. That doesn't seem right to me.

Rachel: There's a, in this interview I read, a curator of modern design at MoMA says that glass frying pans produced during that period, quote, "Have a certain shock value. It was one thing to put a casserole dish in the oven, but putting glass in direct contact with heat was an uncomfortable idea."

Griffin: Well, sure. Yeah. I mean, you don't think of glass as being like able to kind of disperse heat in the kind of way that a really good frying pan can.

Rachel: True. I like the idea, and I like this with casserole dishes too, that you can see like what's happening on the bottom.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: You know? Which is not some—but yeah, the idea of like a glass frying pan does stress me out.

Griffin: It seems real bad to me.

Rachel: Yeah. But that, again, ended 1979. And then '70s and '80s, that's when the microwave came out. So like how bomb all of a sudden that you can put—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And the big thing about the like Pyrex is that with plastic, you get a lot of like leaching of like the sauces and whatnot, and chemicals and all that.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah/

Rachel: But with Pyrex, like there's none. There's none of that—

Griffin: This is not sponsored by Pyrex, we—

Rachel: No, no, no.

Griffin: I know we don't have to clarify that on this show—

Rachel: And I'm talking about borosilicate glass.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: I'm not entirely—Pyrex is my shorthand. This is like Kleenex for me.

Griffin: You don't care so much about the company, as much as the product.

Rachel: Exactly. Yeah, as I mentioned, 80% of homes have some today. So really what I am is I'm a woman of the people. [titters]

Griffin: That's, I've always said that to be true of you.

Rachel: Yeah, that's Pyrex. I don't know, I was thinking about it today because we are basically totally out, and I just ordered some more.

Griffin: Fuck yeah! Fuck yes!

Rachel: [chuckles] We've been doing a lot of leftovers lately, and we've just gotten to a point now when I purged our drawer, that we don't have any containers to put leftovers—

Griffin: Don't know how that happened.

Rachel: In.

Griffin: I love getting a big order from like a... you know, an Indian place. And then like—

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Getting like huge portions. You just dump all that right into the Pyrex and you eat out of it. And when you're done, put the lid on?!

Rachel: Man, we haven't ordered from that Indian place in a while.

Griffin: We have not!

Rachel: You just reminded me.

Griffin: [sings] Tonight.

Rachel: [sings] Ooh-ooh.

Griffin: [sings] I celebrate—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [sings] 'Indian food with you.' Is that it?

Rachel: That's my topic.

Griffin: That was so great.

Rachel: Thank you.

Griffin: Can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yes.

[theme music plays]

Jeremy: Hey, everybody! I'm Jeremy.

Oscar: I'm Oscar.

Dimitri: I'm Dimitri.

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Oscar: We're a weekly podcast spreading the word of the Eurovision Song Contest, the most important music competition in the world.

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Oscar: Oh, okay. Cool.

[break]

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[break]

Griffin: Today, I would like to pull up Google Docs on my phone.

Rachel: Wouldn't it be nice if you had a printout like me?

Griffin: It would be so nice. I'm going to talk about something that was inspired by the episode of Besties I recorded earlier today. It is a broad genre of games for which there is no name. My good friend and Polygon editor in chief, Chris Plante, gave them the title UI RPGs, which is a user interface role playing game. Basically, any game that you play that

simulates some sort of computer interface, and that is the main way of interacting with the game.

This is inspired by a game I just finished called *The Roottrees are Dead*. But this whole sub-genre is very broad and there's a lot of entries in it. Even though like there hasn't been a lot of exploration of like what this sub-genre really means. The first game in this category I can remember playing is one we actually played together, which was *Her Story*. Do you remember *Her Story*?

Rachel: Oh, yeah, we played that on a plane or something.

Griffin: Yes, we were on some long flight. I forget if it was like coming back from Hong Kong or some—like some long trip. And we played start to finish through all of it, like sharing a pair of earplugs. And it was very, very cool. *Her Story* is a detective game, which is sort of a common companion to the UI RPG kind of like sub-genre. A lot of them are mystery or detective games where you are trying to unravel something through this interface. In *Her Story*, the interface is this database of police interviews with this woman named—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Smith. And you are trying to find clues in this, you know, database of interviews to try and solve her husband's disappearance. And the way it kind of like pans out is you'll watch a clip for one of these interviews. You might hear Hannah say something, mention some name, or some place, or some event of importance. And then you can search in this like search bar like, okay, well, then I'll search Cornwall and see if there's any other result. And it will pull up other clips that you haven't seen before. And that's the only way that you kind of find—

Rachel: Yeah, okay.

Griffin: Is this striking... striking a bell for you?

Rachel: Well, I was trying to figure out what this genre was that you were speaking of. And it sounds like what you're describing, like this is a common vehicle?

Griffin: It is becoming somewhat common. It is a very nascent like sort of way of making games, I think it's kind.

Rachel: It's kind of like escape roomy a little bit, right?

Griffin: I think that's maybe a good way of thinking about it. The way that an escape—

Rachel: But you have to kind of—to figure out how the game works, you have to like dig around.

Griffin: Yes, exactly. But the—I guess my main area of fascination with this genre is that the thing you're digging around in is a simulation of a computer. That's all, right? Like you're not a character standing up and walking around and doing a bunch of stuff. You're sitting at a fictional computer and using a fictional search engine to like do stuff. Which is very much a mirror of like what most of us are doing every day on computers, right? It is this idea of taking the video game formula of character goes out and does a thing out in the world, and instead making it character does a thing on a computer.

Which is really what we're all doing all the time anyway. That I find really, really fascinating. And I think Her Story is a really excellent example of it, and a really good forebear. The creator of that game is named Sam Barlow. He's gone on to sort of spearhead this whole genre. His latest game was called Immortality. And in it, you are going through old film clips and behind the scenes footage and like TV interviews with all of these like stars of cinema, to try and figure out what happened to this missing actress. And you kind of like unravel this grand conspiracy along the way.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Very much in the same vein as Her Story, but more like exploring like movies and cinema through this fictional interface where you are going

through and going and looking at things. There's a game that came out last year called *The Operator*, where you're an agent for this fictional federal bureau, basically like the FBI. And the operator, you're basically the guy in the chair for like cool field agents who are like out there like, "Hey, I'm chasing this guy and I got this video footage, I need you to enhance!" Like you're the nerd at the desk doing the enhancing.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But all that you see in the game ever is the screen of your computer that you have at the FDI headquarters, is the name of it. And you are the operator. At one point, you have to get on your computer and walk a field agent through a bomb disarming manual as this like countdown timer is going off in the background. It's very, very cool. And again, like it's—there are some scenes like you get up from your computer, but it's presented all blurry and like you just are really just hearing sounds of everything.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: The only thing you ever really see is like your computer at your desk. It is a simulation of a person who does a job at a computer, which is—

Rachel: What—

Griffin: Kind of neat.

Rachel: What device are you playing this on?

Griffin: On my computer!

Rachel: Okay. [laughs]

Griffin: Isn't that crazy?! There's all—there's another sub-subgenre of this that are like doing this, but a phone. I forget the name of this game, but there's one where it's like found phone mystery. Where you find the phone of this girl who's disappeared, but it's on your phone. And so it looks like a phone, but you're playing it on your phone. My favorite game in this genre is one called *Hypnospace Outlaw*, which is a fuckin' [chef's kiss] incredible title.

Where you are basically a moderator for Hypnospace, which is kind of a parody of early internet that people access in their dreams. The game takes place in 1999, and so there's a lot of Y2K fear and panic happening. But it's like you are a moderator of all these GeoCities-ass web pages, all of these like web rings. And it looks a lot like in the internet at the turn of the 20th century.

Rachel: Yeah. Wow.

Griffin: You can like download a fictional Winamp and like get your own skins and download pirated MP3s from it. While also like moderating copyright infringement and harassment and piracy on these different—it is... it is a hysterically funny game that is also very cool, because you're going through a simulation of the whole internet. It's like really, very, very ambitious.

And this game that I just finished, The Roottrees are Dead, is a genealogy game. Where you're a genealogist trying to piece together this whole sprawling Roottree family, who are these like candy company magnates who have this whole empire. And a bunch of them just died in a plane crash. And you're trying to piece together this like twisted history of this big family by using a search browser.

And using like a library search engine where you can find books by specific authors. Or a periodicals website, if you can find the name a certain newspaper. So it's like, you'll find the name of a... of a magazine in some search result. But Google's not going to turn up the names of every Roottree, because some of them aren't famous. For those, you gotta go to the local newspaper of the thing and then in there.

Rachel: Oh my gosh.

Griffin: And you're putting together like pictures and names and professions and relationships on this huge, sprawling family tree, basically at your computer or at your evidence desk.

Rachel: How do you keep track of all this stuff? Like that was the hard thing for me about Her Story, is that like because it's supposed to be kind of like a

realistic dive, like you're not getting like little achievement pop ups that are like helping you keep track of your next thing that you're supposed to do.

Griffin: So, Roottrees are Dead I think does this really well. This game just came out, so if you're listening to this and you like this genre of game, I cannot recommend it hardly enough. One, you have a little journal, so anytime you find something on a search engine, you can just highlight it and save it to your journal—

Rachel: Oh, okay.

Griffin: Which is very cool. It also takes a lot of inspiration from this game called Return of the Obra Dinn, where you're an insurance adjuster on an old, old like cargo ship, trying to solve the mystery of why everyone on board it disappeared—filling out the manifest. And it will confirm things and lock things in.

Rachel: Okay, that's good.

Griffin: If you get three at a time correct. That way, you can't just guess at shit. You have to get three things correct and it'll say, okay, those three things, locked in. Same thing with this game. If you get three identities on the family tree correct, it'll lock 'em in, say you got that. Don't worry about that. Use that as an anchor to solve the rest of them.

Rachel: Yeah. Okay.

Griffin: And so like I guess the connective tissue of all of these games is that there is a thread that you start tugging on. And there is a momentum to how that thread begins to unravel that kept us playing Her Story. We didn't put Her Story down because we couldn't. If we did, we would have forgotten everything that we were like doing. That is kind of like the strength of the whole kind of detective genre.

And I think that there is something really magical about doing that in an interface that sort of mirrors our own realities, like search engines or computer programs or historic internet databases. This idea that like these—the computer that you use every day could contain this mystery that if

you're good enough at googling stuff, you can unravel with no other skills in your belt whatsoever. I find that really, really compelling and really exciting.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And it is a type of thing that like, again, there's not—like the only name for this genre I could find is UI RPG from Chris Plante that he mentioned on The Besties I think a couple times.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And it is really, really neat to me that there's this whole... I don't know, this whole world of games that is forming out of recognition that we spend so much of our time online. Or we spend so much of our time at our computers. And so just a simulation of that holds so much potential and so much value as a story—

Rachel: Yeah. Well, and like the comparable thing is that thrill of like you remember a teacher or classmate that you had 20 years ago. And you go on this like internet search for that person.

Griffin: Yes!

Rachel: And if they're not on social media, you do a lot of like different terms and trying to connect them to people. And that's like always kind of thrilling.

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: So like I appreciate why this would be good too.

Griffin: I took a few like investigative journalism classes in college, because you have to in the J school program. And it was like really interesting because they teach you about all these different tools that you can use to like fill out Freedom of Information Act requests. Which has gotten significantly harder—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Since the 2000s. But I was always like really frustrated I remember, because like it didn't unravel in a satisfying, scripted way that a video game might. But I cannot play enough of these games. Like I am so, so into the detective genre and this like fictional interface genre. And this game, *The Roottrees Are Dead*, is a very, very good example of it. But there's so many out there and it's exciting to me that there's just more and more and more of them coming out it seems like each year.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: I have some submissions from our friends at home. Do you want to know what they are talking about?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: We got one here from Chloe who says, "My small wonder is that a sunfish in a Japanese aquarium was not feeling so well, but got better when the staff put cardboard cutouts with human faces and clothes around the tank to make the sunfish less lonely during the Aquarium's renovations. The sunfish loves people." We got this from a lot of folks. I think I saw it in the Facebook group as well.

Rachel: Really?

Griffin: The story of this—

Rachel: This specific story?

Griffin: Yes, this Japanese aquarium was undergoing repairs, and this sunfish just wasn't getting any visitors—

Rachel: Oh my gosh.

Griffin: And seemed sad. So they put cardboard stand—

Rachel: That's a whole Pixar movie right there.

Griffin: A pretty short one, but yeah. I mean, it could—

Rachel: Well, okay, like one of the ones that you see before the feature length.

Griffin: That's great, yeah.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Put it before finding whatever the last—

Rachel: And plus like, man, an animated sunfish sounds pretty great.

Griffin: It sounds pretty good to me.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Still think about that slime. Reed says, "I love the sound of my dishwasher draining into my sink. I can even see the cascade of dirty water if I look straight down into my drain. Just knowing my dishwasher is doing all that work for me and it's dumping the dirty water makes me happy. It's also a fun gurgle. Dishwashers are so efficient and lovely."

Rachel: Wow.

Griffin: I know the sound.

Rachel: I know, I've never looked in there. I've always been really confused how that works, if I'm honest.

Griffin: The water go from sink to dishwasher, and then dishwasher into sink.

Rachel: Yeah, but how?

Griffin: Ashes to ashes, dust—pipes!

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Pipes and tubes.

Rachel: Well, you have pipes. Pipes. Sure.

Griffin: I love the sound of our dishwasher finishing its job, because it makes a lot of noise.

Rachel: And it pops the door open.

Griffin: And then you hear [clicks tongue] and it pops the door. Not all the way open, it doesn't swing—

Rachel: I know.

Griffin: It just kind of cracks it a little bit—

Rachel: The first time that happened when we moved here, it was the most—

Griffin: Scared.

Rachel: Confusing like, what did we do to this thing?

Griffin: It scared me.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Thanks to Bo En and Augustus for the use our theme song, Money Won't Pay. You can find a link to that in the episode description. Thank you to maximumfun.org for having us on the network. We're so honored to be a part of this network. We got some new merch up in the merch store over at mcelroymerch.com. There's an energy dragon pin from McElroy Family Clubhouse.

And 10% of all merch proceeds this month will be donated to the Palestine Children's Relief Fund. We got some shows coming up in Florida and Tampa and Jacksonville. We're doing some MBMBaMs and TAZ down there, February 20th through the 22nd. You can get tickets to that at

bit.ly/mcelroytours. And that's going to do it for us this week on Wonderful. 'Til next time, keep it... keep it slimming like a sunfish. And stay warm out there, folks.

Rachel: I don't know how to play with you in this space.

Griffin: Some days I get to the end of the road and I realize that there's no, it's—there's just a wall there.

Rachel: Yeah. Sometimes you sound a little bit like a weatherman, a little bit?

Griffin: But they have it easy, don't they? You don't think about that, but weathermans get up there and all they do is they say it's hot today.

Rachel: Grab an umbrella on your way out the door.

Griffin: Back to you, Charles! We don't have—that would be so sick. Can you imagine—

Rachel: If we had a Charles? [titters]

Griffin: If our podcast was inside a podcast, and therefore we had no pressure to start and end.

Rachel: Is that why Justin does what he does do you think, with Munch Squad?

Griffin: I think that might be why he does—

Rachel: You just get in and out, no pressure to start or end.

Griffin: Yeah. So we could... maybe we do that for this one and be like, back to you, Charles!

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

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