

Still Buffering 419: Arcane

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

Sydnee: Hello and welcome to *Still Buffering*, a cross-generational guide to the culture that made us. I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Sydnee: Tey, are you hunkering down with lots of supplies? Water and bread and... whatnot.

Taylor: For what?

Sydnee: For the polar vortex.

Taylor: I don't think we're gonna get vortexed up here in New York.

Sydnee: I thought you all always get whatever we get, all the vortexes, I thought they end up up there.

Taylor: No, I feel like it's goin' like through the Midwest and down.

Sydnee: Mm.

Taylor: I think we're being left out.

Sydnee: It's not good when it goes down, „cause then you start hittin' people who aren't used to this.

Taylor: Yeah, well you know, that seems to be how our weather is workin' these days, with the whole—

Sydnee: [chuckles]

Taylor: — the whole climate change thing. That's its whole deal, right? New weather all over the place.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Infrastructure that wasn't built for it.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Woo-hoo.

Sydnee: See that's the good thing about... here in West Virginia is that we don't have infrastructure, so... [chuckles] we—

Taylor: Hey that's— that's lookin' on the bright side. [chuckles]

Sydnee: We don't— We're prepared for anything „cause we're prepared for nothin'.

Taylor: Well.

Sydnee: How do you like that?

Taylor: That is— That sounds like the West Virginia state motto.

Sydnee: We're— No, I say that and I know that there's gonna be somebody who's like, "Listen, I live in West Virginia and that's not very nice." I've lived here my whole life, so I'm allowed to say this. [chuckles]

Taylor: Yeah, you're allowed to say whatever you want.

Sydnee: I'm allowed to say what I want, and the truth is this, nobody's comin' to recuse us here. There's nobody lookin' out for us, we have to look out for ourselves.

And if you can't do for yourself, you're done, so you take care of you and your neighbors. [chuckles] And that's the best we can do here, so we're ready for whatever. Go for it, throw it as us, polar vortex. [chuckles]

Taylor: Now, see New York is— has been like... I mean I've been here for 20 years now. I remember it being colder more consistently. It's been warmer the last couple years, so like cold is our— We can do cold, we can do cold all day.

My guy at my bodega on the corner will be there, he doesn't need to be, I'd be perfectly happy if he didn't come to work, but he will. Like he lives above it, he's gonna be there...

Sydnee: That's convenient.

Taylor: In the middle of a snowstorm.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah. So, you know, I mean I could stock up on supplies, but then I could make eye contact with the guy that I buy my supplies from from my window, so it's like, "What am I doin'?" [chuckles]

Sydnee: [chuckles]

Taylor: That's bad for like a long-term— I don't have long-term plans, what are we talkin' about? [chuckles]

Sydnee: That's— The— I think there— You also see more of that in areas like this where it's more rural. And I mean even like technically I live in a city, technically. Technically. But the entire state of West Virginia I think is considered rural.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: We are the only state all encompassed by Appalachia. But we... You can't really— Like you couldn't walk from— You could walk from where I live to go buy supplies at like, let's see, there's a Dollar General not too far. You could walk to that and back. It'd be a bit of a trek in the snow, and there's some mountains, but you could get there.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: But it's not that— But for most of the people in the— in West Virginia, like to walk to a grocery store, or even just like a, you know, gas station convenience store, it would not be feasible.

Taylor: Well and that's— I mean that's part of the reason that you stock up, right. So—

Sydnee: Right.

Taylor: Not just to avoid walking in the cold, but also to avoid driving—

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: — in bad weather.

Sydnee: Sure.

Taylor: Like, you know...

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: I love an excuse to stock up. I never buy things that are actually useful, but like, “Oh no! I gotta— I got a bunch of wine, and a bunch of... like...” I’ll just order like three orders of takeout from my Chinese food place and then just put „em in the fridge, and that’s my plan.

Sydnee: Our Christmas cupboard is still full, which I don’t know—

Taylor: Now Sydnee, you’re saying that like everyone knows what a Christmas cupboard is, which you’re the one who told me what it means, so you need to explain to everybody else. [chuckles]

Sydnee: I thought a lot of people watched *Derry Girls*, which I think is where Americans learned about the Christmas cupboard. And so maybe they were understanding.

I saw a clip on TikTok of an episode of *Derry Girls* where they talk about their Christmas cupboard, and then an Irish person explaining what the Christmas cupboard was.

Taylor: Alright.

Sydnee: But I feel like a lot of Americans probably heard about it from that. It’s a cupboard where you keep all your Christmas treats.

Taylor: Well it— say it like— after Christmas, you put all the same treats away, and you’re like, “Not til next year.”

Sydnee: Yes, you're not supposed to touch it. You're not supposed to crack into the Christmas cupboard unless it's Christmas.

Taylor: Mm.

Sydnee: And so you keep like the boozes we associated with Christmas, and the candies, and cookies, and whatnots. So we have that cupboard now. Justin and I got very excited at the idea of that.

Taylor: For just a little baby, little sniff, little hint of prepping.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Just a little bit. Just a little bit.

Taylor: I'm— I don't know, this is not meant as an insult, but I could see you taking it as one. I'm surprised you all haven't gotten into that, it just feels right for...

Sydnee: Prepping?

Taylor: A little bit.

Sydnee: I mean... I won't say... Okay. [chuckles] During like peak lockdown, we definitely developed some like prepping hobbies, right.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Like I got really into gardening, and now I'm pretty decent at growing our own food. Like that's all I ever wanted to garden. My front flowerbed has been taken over by edible herbs and arugula. All I— But that's all, I just wanted to grow food.

And then Justin got really into— Like it started woodworking but like then it became really practical like he can build things out of wood that are nice to look at, but also practically like we needed a table and we didn't wanna leave the house to buy a table, so he built us a table. And like stuff like that. And then that grew into— He's like— He has some minor electrician knowledge now.

Taylor: Minor electrician knowledge.

Sydnee: He can fix a lot of things.

Taylor: Well, we're in 2025, I feel like developing a survival skill of some kind is... should be on the— When you're making your resolution list, I wouldn't not advise putting one of those on there, so that seems like a good idea.

Sydnee: Yeah, I mean that's— I guess that's some prepping stuff. I don't know, I—

Taylor: I've got nothing to offer in a— in a apocalypse situation, so it's good, good for you.

Sydnee: You're resourceful.

Taylor: Well yeah, I mean.

Sydnee: You can adapt well, yeah.

Taylor: That's, you know, that doesn't— you don't list that in your skills. When you're applying to be part of a, I don't know, a apocalypse commune, you can't say, "resourceful." [wheezes] You need a skill.

Sydnee: That's a huge part of it. That's a huge part. Listen, one of— when I— whenever I talk about like what my skillset is, like problem solving in a general vague sense is one of my stronger skills.

And like I think that I apply it most frequently in medicine, like you give me a collection of clues of data, and I have to piece together what might be going on and then how best to solve the problem of getting you the care you need.

Which is, you know, that doesn't sound like— If you live in America, you know what a big problem that is, there it is. You know, and especially with the population of patients I take care of. So like problem solving is a skillset I have, but I apply it to all areas of my life.

So like if I was in a survival situation, I feel like there are a lot of things that even if I don't immediately know how to do something, I could probably come up with a good idea of what to do next, even if I've never been in that situation before „cause I'm good at, you know... Those sorts of general things are good skills.

Taylor: Well but I mean I agree with you, I think that you have very good problem-solving skills, but I think that that is gonna be outshone by the fact that you are offering— I mean just in regular America, offering [chuckles] medical knowledge is hard to come by. So in a— in a—

Sydnee: Well. [chuckles]

Taylor: — apocalypse situation, there'd be— You can't even like get a doctor to tell you what's wrong with you normally easily, so you're gonna have...

Sydnee: Well.

Taylor: High recruitment rate for that.

Sydnee: Yeah, I mean I guess on a very surface level yes, being a doctor could be helpful. [chuckles]

Taylor: Yeah, on a surface level.

Sydnee: I'm just saying that I think like— I think about these things and how—

Taylor: I just wouldn't lead with gardening, I would lead with immense medical knowledge.

Sydnee: [chuckles]

Taylor: And then be like, "Also I can garden." [chuckles]

Sydnee: I guess that's fair, „cause I'm better at doctoring than I am at gardening, I will say that, like.

Taylor: That's great, that's a better— That's probably better.

Sydnee: [chuckles] I'm trying to get better at gardening, but I spend so much time [laughs] doctoring it interferes.

Taylor: I think that's an—

Sydnee: It gets in the way of my other things.

Taylor: That is a more useful distribution of skills. [chuckles]

Sydnee: I just think you gotta— you have to expand... you ca— You gotta break out of the capitalist idea of what is most useful. Your resourcefulness and creativity is an incredibly useful skill for humanity as a whole, and especially in a crisis situation.

Taylor: Well, I mean Syd. I don't— See I don't— I would dis— I mean I'm being complete, you know I'm just being honest, like I proposed this specifically in a "When would prepping be useful? An apocalypse-like situation," and I don't think anyone's gonna say, "Who's gonna paint the walls?" [chuckles]

Sydnee: Well, but that's not... You— You are being reductive of your skillset.

Taylor: Well, I mean I can—

Sydnee: [chuckles]

Taylor: I can bartend? I mean oh, don't get me wrong. [chuckles]

Sydnee: Okay now again, if we're goin' back to surface level, that's an incredibly useful skill.

Taylor: Now if I could learn— if I should— In this vein of conversation, if I increased my fermentation and like distillation knowledge, then maybe, „cause I could see that being a very useful skill.

Sydnee: Essential.

Taylor: Not useful in like people, you know, living, but what you could barter with, yes.

Sydnee: I feel like in every movie about like some sort of apocalyptic survival situation, or even like weird show like *From*, I don't know if you're on that *From* train.

Taylor: Mm-mm. I've not taken the *From* train. [chuckles]

Sydnee: Which is, I don't know, it's like *Lost* again, but like—

Taylor: *Lost Again*. [chuckles]

Sydnee: *Lost Again*. [chuckles]

Taylor: *Lost, Oh No. How Did We Do This?* [chuckles]

Sydnee: *Lost* but less tropical.

Taylor: Mm.

Sydnee: It's— If you're in those situations, any time we depict them in media, someone is making booze.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Somebody is like, "I had to figure out [chuckles] how to make alcohol." My— For step one, I need to distill.

Taylor: I mean yeah, certain historians, I mean look at like why civilization happened, a lot of people have proposed I think we know like we made the social contract to grow crops, but we're pretty sure we didn't grow those crops to make bread, we're pretty sure we grew those crops to make booze. Civilization exists „cause somebody went "You wanna get drunk, and I wanna get drunk, so we should help each other out." [chuckles]

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: "Be a lot easier if we worked on this together."

Taylor: "Ah."

Sydnee: "It's also more fun."

Taylor: "I gotta do this hunter gatherer thing, it's just not gonna fly. But if one of us, if one of us could become a farmer..."

Sydnee: Yeah, and it's also— I mean like we understood intrinsically that you shouldn't drink alone. [chuckles]

Taylor: Mm-hmm, that's true.

Sydnee: We wanted to drink in societies.

Taylor: Well I'll work on my apocalyptic booze skills. You're good though, I'm— [chuckles]

Sydnee: I'm covered.

Taylor: I think you're good, you're covered.

Sydnee: Yeah, I do better in situations where it's not all laid out for me, where I have to kind of adapt. That's where I'm at my wiliest, I'm at my most effective.

Taylor: Yeah, I agree with that, but I think that's— Apparently, at least in a therapeutic mindset, it's because I live in a constant state of anxiety, so when there's actually conditions that inspire anxiety, I am comfortable.

Sydnee: Mm.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Well that make sense.

Taylor: Yeah. Like if you constantly are afraid that everything's going wrong, when everything goes wrong you're like, "Ah, finally."

Sydnee: I can see that. I feel like Justin has said that to me before about himself.

Taylor: [chuckles] Well it's—

Sydnee: I think for me it's that my brain generally needs to be doing several things at once, and if I only have one thing— That's why it's hard for me to go to the movies. If I have to sit and just watch a movie, and the only thing I'm doing is watching that movie, that is really hard for my brain.

Taylor: Mm.

Sydnee: Like I don't wanna say— „bored' isn't the right word. Like I'd be— I used to say that, like, "I find that boring," but it's not— I'm not bored, „cause like I might be really enjoying the movie. So it's not boredom. Sometimes I'll say, "my brain gets itchy."

Taylor: Okay.

Sydnee: And I don't know what that means.

Taylor: Well, I mean I would—

Sydnee: But that's how I'd describe it.

Taylor: I could guess at what that means, but I'm not a— You're the doctor. [chuckles]

Sydnee: But I like situations where things are falling apart. I don't like when things are falling apart.

Taylor: No.

Sydnee: But I like to be... able to help manage those situations. I like— I have the skillset to cope with those, because then I have to do multiple things with my brain all at the same time, and then I feel very calm.

We talk about this a lot, whenever I'm in like an emergency medical kinda situation, in the work I do, time slows down for me. I feel like I'm like Neo dodging a bullet.

Taylor: Mm.

Sydnee: Everything goes slower, I feel like my pulse drop and I am calm, and I am able to assess and move through the situation with absolutely no panic because my brain is having to do 10 different things, and run different scenarios, and decide the best plan of action and how to direct everyone in it, all at the same time. And that is when I am at my most effective.

Taylor: Now see, I understand this because I think the same thing happens on, say, a busy Friday night at the bar, when you know...

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Kitchen's backed up, and you've got tickets runnin' out of the machine, and you've gotta make three drinks, and talk to people. But! Remarkably lower stakes and a lot less money, so I don't know, I— [wheezes] Same—

Sydnee: Well.

Taylor: Same comfort spot in the brain, I utilize mine in a dumb way. [chuckles]

Sydnee: No, no. Don't— See, you belittle that. No, it's not— Yes, it— I agree, it's not life or death, but you have—

Taylor: You would think so.

Sydnee: [chuckles]

Taylor: When someone doesn't have their extra dirty martini!

Sydnee: You have the [chuckles] training and skillset to— and the knowledge to like thrive in that kind of situation. I have the training and skillset and knowledge to thrive in my situation. If we reversed us... you would be just as panicked is you were in my shoes as I would be if I were in your shoes.

Taylor: Yeah, no, no, I would be significantly more so, because the worst that happens in your—

Sydnee: [chuckles]

Taylor: If you— [chuckles] The worst thing that happens for you is you don't get somebody their properly balanced cocktail. I kill somebody, so I'm sorry, let you give yourself your flowers, Sydnee. [chuckles]

Sydnee: All these things matter. I think applying yourself to something that you do for someone else, and doing their best for them is important, whatever that thing is. I believe that.

Taylor: None of this has anything to do with what we're supposed to talk about today.

Sydnee: No, it doesn't. I mean it's a little apocalyptic, I guess.

Taylor: That's true, I guess we're kind of talk— It's sort of an apocalyptic setting.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: I just— I— We're talking about *Arcane* today, which is a two season Netflix animated show, based on a video game *League of Legends*. Loosely based, I guess. I've never played the video game, to be honest.

And it's not— There's not like... the storyline is not in the game, this is just a byproduct. But it is sort of apocalyptic. I just thought you'd like it, „cause, I don't know, there's a— a punch lesbian, and I thought you would like that.

Sydnee: I did like it, I enjoyed it a lot. Are we gonna spoil it for our audience?

Taylor: Um, well—

Sydnee: „Cause I know season one has been out for a while, but season two just finished.

Taylor: You haven't watched it all, correct?

Sydnee: I've watched it all, Taylor.

Taylor: You watched it all?

Sydnee: Yes. We delayed our recording and I finished it.

Taylor: Oh wow! I'm impressed.

Sydnee: I know. I know.

Taylor: I did not— Last time we talked, you were like three episodes in and I was like, "That's fine, we'll talk about the first season."

Sydnee: Well that was like two weeks ago.

Taylor: Yeah, but I don't know, I don't know your life.

Sydnee: Yes. I—

Taylor: Your life is very busy, it's very hectic.

Sydnee: I devoted myself to it, I watched it all, and I... Well, I didn't know if we were gonna spoil it.

Taylor: Well yes, I think we are going to spoil it because you've watched it all and we're gonna talk about it. We're not gonna talk about it again, so you know.

Sydnee: Yes. Is there gonna be more?

Taylor: No. Well there will be more—

Sydnee: For sure?

Taylor: — in that world, but not with these characters.

Sydnee: That's sad.

Taylor: I mean I think that like my guess is—

Sydnee: I was very sad. [chuckles]

Taylor: Well I—

Sydnee: That's why I didn't know if we were— I was about to say that, and then I was like, "Are we gonna spoil it? Okay, we are going to spoil it."

Taylor: Okay yes, we are going to spoil it because I'm going to immediately say something—

Sydnee: That was very sad.

Taylor: — that is kind of a spoiler. Jinx is like the flagship character, like one of the biggest face characters for the game. So even though it seems like perhaps she died at the end of it, there's lots of reasons to suggest she did not.

Sydnee: Okay.

Taylor: And I think that's because she will be a character that continues to pop up as they tell stories in other parts of the world of *League of Legends*.

Sydnee: Okay. So she's not really dead.

Taylor: No, well, and I think let's not even like— Like I'm not one to— I follow the clues the narrative gives me, and like that— We are literally jumping right to the end. That scene where Caitlin is looking at the maps.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And she sees that their exit route, there are exit valves in that chamber.

Sydnee: Ohhh yeah, yeah.

Taylor: Why include that? Because it literally is—

Sydnee: Unless she got out.

Taylor: Yeah, and it syncs up with, when you look at that explosion, there's like a little like streak that goes away. So like— And her first line in the entire thing is, "One day I'm gonna ride one of those things," she's talking about the airships.

Sydnee: Ohhhhh.

Taylor: And in the last scene is an airship leaving, so I— there's a lot of people that think like she clearly got on an airship, she's gonna pop up again.

Because the *League of Legends* like I guess the universe has a lot of different— like people from different places are all involved in the central storyline, but the next season, wherever that happens, will take place in a completely different land, with completely different characters, but Jinx will have the ability to pop up.

Sydnee: That makes a lot more sense. I— Well I— So I immediately, after finishing, I was looking like, "Is there gonna be a season three?" and I couldn't find any evidence that there was going to, and so I think that's why I just assumed like, "Oh, we, I mean, I guess she is dead. If there's no season three, why would there be—" You know.

Taylor: Well, I mean may— if— even if there's nothing else to do with her, I feel like they left enough of a breadcrumb to say she's probably not dead.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Like why include those scenes if not for that?

Sydnee: Do you wanna summarize the— Oh, that's a lot to summarize. I was gonna say summarize the plot, like a basic outline.

Taylor: Oh, yeah let's see.

Sydnee: It's a lot to—

Taylor: I mean, I feel like, I don't know, there's... It's... Yeah, that is kind of hard.

Sydnee: There's—

Taylor: There's an undercity where like—

Sydnee: There's two sisters. [chuckles]

Taylor: There's two sisters. They both grew up in this undercity, which is— I mean it's all— it's about class warfare. [wheezes]

Sydnee: Yeah. There's the rich people up top, the topsiders, and then there's the undercity.

Taylor: Yeah. And...

Sydnee: And.

Taylor: They become sort of embroiled in the war between the two of them. There's also a whole other storyline about two men discovering...

Sydnee: Magic.

Taylor: Magic.

Sydnee: Which magic is bad in this world initially because magic had destroyed worlds in the past.

Taylor: Yes.

Sydnee: So they really didn't want— They wanted everybody to just like mess around with science, but don't mess around with magic please.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: And then this guy's like, "I'm gonna mess around with both, and make technology that's magic." And that's part of it too.

Taylor: Yeah, yeah.

Sydnee: I don't know—

Taylor: We get a little gay in the process.

Sydnee: I mean that's coded, right?

Taylor: Yeah. I think— I mean it's funny like I don't— This is a show that is comfortable with having out gay characters.

Sydnee: Right.

Taylor: And then you still have kind of a weird subverted like they're definitely buddies, but are they just buddies? [chuckles] Like—

Sydnee: I mean they really care— Like, their— their relationship is pretty central to the resolution of it all.

Taylor: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Like the depth with which they care about one another is pretty central.

Taylor: The— Yeah.

Sydnee: So. Which I mean, I don't— which could just be like two best friends. [chuckles]

Taylor: [chuckles] Could mean nothing! This is like Matt Damon and Ben Affleck, it could mean nothing.

Sydnee: They're just best friends.

Taylor: I don't know.

Sydnee: I mean you can— You know.

Taylor: Okay, well alright, I don't— It's— There's—

Sydnee: [chuckles]

Taylor: There's an undercity, there's an overcity—

Sydnee: We sound like people who—

Taylor: — there's a war going on, it's a great show. What did you think of it? You tell me.

Sydnee: I was gonna say we sound like people who have never had friends. Like, "I don't know, like if you love somebody that much, you must be in love with them, right?"

Taylor: Well now wait a second.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: I've had lots of friends, I don't want this to sound as a discredit to my friends, there aren't so many people that I would enter a, I don't know, a constantly repetitive like multiverse cycle to free with. I don't know, I feel like that's— Maybe it's not... I think that's more than love. That's a higher thing than love. That's soulmates, right?

Sydnee: Mmmmm. Yeah.

Taylor: Doesn't have to— It can be platonic.

Sydnee: Platonic soulmates.

Taylor: Sure. Or like—

Sydnee: [chuckles] You don't often hear that together, but sure.

Taylor: No, I mean it's probably not that, but whatever it is—

Sydnee: Sure.

Taylor: — it was way more than just bros. [chuckles]

Sydnee: Yeah. They're able to have that.

Taylor: Bros being bros, you know, crossing a multiverse to free you from a cycle of death. That's just bro stuff.

Sydnee: There are people who have that relationship. I mean I care very deeply about my friends, like... I mean some of them, you know.

Taylor: Okay, well.

Sydnee: [chuckles] I don't know. But my soulmate is my husband, so I don't know, like— Anyway. I like the show a lot, I really enjoyed it. I thought— I understand, I know you saw— Although it made me sad that you saw like echoes of our relationship in the siblings.

Taylor: Well.

Sydnee: Because then [chuckles] because of the ending that I was like, "Wait."

Taylor: I just mean— Well, I mean yes, I— I think that it is... it is difficult to argue that [chuckles] you are not very much like Vi. [chuckles]

Sydnee: [chuckles]

Taylor: I think we would both agree on that.

Sydnee: I mean I— Yeah... I don't think I've ever been that hard on you. [chuckles]

Taylor: Well, regardless. I absolutely relate to the weird little creepy one that makes— [chuckles] makes stuff.

Sydnee: Creepy bombs.

Taylor: Yeah. I think, you know.

Sydnee: Yeah, and I mean I guess righteous punching is a— is definitely more how I go through life.

Taylor: Yeah no, I think that— I think if somebody said, "Sydnee, would you like these fists that are bigger fists that you could wear over your fists?" you would say like, "No question, absolutely yes."

Sydnee: I know, that would be— I mean I am not somebody who physically fights the battles that I fight, but like yes, that would be my inclination, were I to live in such a world. [chuckles]

Taylor: Yeah, I think you would like extra big fists.

Sydnee: Actually, I feel like I should clarify, I don't engage in physical violence with people, like I don't— I've never been in a fi— Other than like when you and I were kids we fought each other.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Like I've never... I've never punched anybody. I don't know, just to put that out there.

Taylor: I— [chuckles]

Sydnee: I just feel like if I needed to, I could. [chuckles]

Taylor: But yeah. Yeah.

[phone rings in the background]

Sydnee: Like to defend what's right.

[phone continues ringing]

Sydnee: Sorry. I don't know how to make this stop.

Taylor: Just a nice interlude.

[phone continues ringing]

Sydnee: It's Justin's phone ringing through the— Okay, there we go, okay. Sorry about that, Justin's phone rings through this computer and it— I don't know how to make it stop other than hanging up Justin's phone call, so I'm hoping he will answer his phone somewhere else in the house.

Anyway. Yeah, I just feel like that I— punching would be my go-to over— I don't ever— I don't like weapons. I wouldn't wanna wield a weapon, I'd just wanna use my fists.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: That feels more pure.

Taylor: More pure, sure yeah.

Sydnee: But see, you're creative and resourceful, you would make weird bombs.

Taylor: [chuckles]

Sydnee: [chuckles]

Taylor: You know what? I agree with that.

Sydnee: I think it's funny, I— Jinx gives me a little, and maybe this is intentional, maybe this is already well-trod.

Taylor: I think I know exactly what you're gonna say.

Sydnee: I didn't like read—

Taylor: But say it anyway.

Sydnee: Harley Quinn vibes.

Taylor: Yes.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: She is built that way.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: And I think it's kind of funny that like, you know, in— „Cause I've watched now— I don't play *League of Legends*.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: But I've lot— watched a lot of her cutscenes just to kind of understand what the character's like in game, and I think it's the same transformation that Harley Quinn went through, where it's like she started out just like...

It's almost— It's like a heightened version of the manic pixie dream girl, where it's like, "Oh, she's crazy! Who knows, she's so insane! Woo!" And it's like oh but wait, like no-one's just like— Everybody's got a reason for— Like let's give her a little bit more substance, a little bit more backstory.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: And so it's like in the game, she is just that, she is almost like a— just a copy of like the old school like Harley Quinn, you know.

Sydnee: Oh okay.

Taylor: And much like Harley Quinn in like the cinematic universe, and in a lot of her more recent comics, she's been given a lot more substance and backstory. I think this Jinx similarly got that treatment.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. Yeah. That's what I— as I was watching that character evolve from Powder into Jinx, I was like, "Oh, okay." [chuckles]

Taylor: Yeah. Yeah, that's— And I mean it— Look, it's a character that sells, clearly.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: But. [chuckles]

Sydnee: Well, I think that... I mean... As a— We talk about this a lot on the show, like I think as a culture, we are more interested in characters that are morally complicated. I think that Vi, for the most part, is just trying to do what's right.

Taylor: Well, but she is—

Sydnee: You know?

Taylor: — but it's not— I mean I think what I like about the show is that every character is morally complicated. Like you could argue like Vi aligns herself with sort of the enforcers, like the you know, the people in control.

Sydnee: The police. [chuckles]

Teylor: Well yeah, I mean but like she's trying to do good, but she kinda becomes a cop.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Teylor: But she's trying to do good. I mean, her girlfriend... borders on [wheezes] some rough territory.

Sydnee: Well. Yeah.

Teylor: But she's trying to do good.

Sydnee: No, I don't think— Her girlfriend definitely... Like morally grey.

Teylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I mean, I don't think you can say that. I think you get this sort of like, "I'm fighting for right" kinda vibe from Vi a lot.

Teylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: And I think that you need characters like that for these sorts of plots, like it— you have to have somebody who's doing that to keep propelling things forward. But I just don't think it's—

I think we are more drawn, as a culture, to the more complicated like, "Is Jinx good or bad, and does it matter? Who's she acting for? What does she want? What is she trying to achieve?" you know. I don't— It's not always clear, and that is more reflective of us as individuals and as a society.

Teylor: Ye— Like, I mean I think that yeah, „cause it's compelling because she doesn't care about being good... But she understands that she should, which I think is different than someone who just goes "I should be good, I should be good, I'm supposed to be good. [chuckles] I'm supposed to be the good guy."

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Like there's a whole— her whole first arc is like, "Yeah, I'm the bad guy," it's like, "Aw man, people don't see me as the bad guy. I guess I gotta shape up." [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah. So I mean I think— But I can understand why a character like that— Plus, I mean she's like... she has cool gadgets and things. [chuckles]

Taylor: [wheezes]

Sydnee: I mean that's— You know.

Taylor: People will like her?

Sydnee: Well, that feels like a fun video game character, right?

Taylor: Yeah, yeah she does have good gadgets.

Sydnee: One that has cooler gadgets.

Taylor: Yeah. I wanna build her shark gun.

Sydnee: Oh that would be cool.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Have you ever done any— Well, I mean I guess— I don't— These char— You said these characters aren't all in *League of Legends*.

Taylor: No they all are.

Sydnee: I was gonna— Oh.

Taylor: Well there's like a few characters that are new for the show, but I mean all of these— all of the main characters are in *League of Legends*.

Sydnee: Oh, okay.

Taylor: Jace, Viktor, Vi.

Sydnee: That's—

Taylor: Jinx. Uh. I thi— Mel is now, I think Mel— Is Mel a new one? I'm sorry if I'm misspeaking, I don't play the game, but Mel should be, „cause she's amazing.

Sydnee: Have you ever done any cosplay from? Or no because you don't play the game?

Taylor: No, I've never done— I— And I usually don't cosplay from things that I haven't like fully... I don't know, enjoyed the media. But I have committed to— There's a friend of mine that does Vi cosplay, so I've agreed to be her Jinx for a con that's comin' up, so I have an excuse to build that big fish gun!

Sydnee: Cool.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: That's really cool. Yeah, I can see that. No I thought— I mean I thought it was— And it was also really beautiful to look at, I assume that's part of it too.

Taylor: That's like its—

Sydnee: Like the whole show.

Taylor: We— You know, we talk a lot about the— like in the animation world about how like everything kind of gets the— the Pixar DreamWorks treatment, everything kinda looks the same.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And so when something looks different, it's just so nice.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: And this just looks so different.

Sydnee: It does. It's very— It's like— It's so colorful, it's like candy, it's like it's yummy to look at.

Taylor: Oh yeah, well and like the artfulness—

Sydnee: If that makes any sense. [chuckles]

Taylor: Oh no, absolutely. Well and like the battle between Jinx and Echo.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Like in season one.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: And like the way that they pace it, the music, like that's just... that's just... artists getting to make art. [chuckles]

Sydnee: Yeah. Yeah, to make art, and then to like... draw an emotional reaction from your audience with everything that you're creating, in a way that I don't know that— Even like... animated films, more recent ones that I really enjoyed, I don't know always used all those elements to their greatest effect.

Taylor: Mm.

Sydnee: You know what I mean?

Taylor: Well it's a— You know I— We've talked about this before, and like what is the— There's a sort of assumption in media that the highest art form anything can exist in is a live action [chuckles] like interpretation, you know, that's the ultimate form anything can be. And it always makes me sad „cause I think that there is a— For every story, there's an art form that tells it best, you know.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Like I will always be a contender that *Watchmen* was told best through a comic. It was built around the style of a comic, it never should've been made into anything beyond that.

I think that this is one of those moments where people understood the— the source material and put it in the best medium possible, and took full

advantage of that medium, and did things that live action couldn't do. Which is perfect for the story.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: Like all of the Echo's— I mean I love Echo, Echo's an amazing character, and like all of his sequences with like the time turning were just so beautifully done.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. I agree with you completely. I think that this would've— I think that's there's a lot of the stuff, especially there's a grittiness to so many elements of it, and intentional kind of like I don't wanna say, "yucky"—

Taylor: [chuckles]

Sydnee: — „cause it didn't come across as gross, but like it's supposed to be kind of yucky. But because it was rendered the way it was, it... I don't know, it avoided being something like, "Ew," like it was not ever repulsive, even when you knew like, "This is supposed to be kind of gritty and yucky," it wasn't that.

I think that's important to it. I— Like as I'm picturing some of those scenes in a live action film, there would've been some really grotty transformation stuff, and I don't know, like big, veiny monstery things.

Taylor: [chuckles]

Sydnee: Live action. You know what I mean? Like it just would've I think torn you out of it and been sort of like, "Eugh," instead of like following the story.

Taylor: I could see— Yeah.

Sydnee: I think it would've— Yeah, you know what I mean?

Taylor: Well I mean that's— I mean it's— that's— I wish we embraced that more like as an aesthetic population, like there is a correct medium for every story, and it doesn't always have to be the grittiest, most high focused reality.

Sydnee: Mm.

Taylor: I mean like *Into the Spider-Verse* is a great example of that as well.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Like that is a story told in the perfect medium.

Sydnee: Right.

Taylor: Like animation— And animation is so powerful because you can tailor it to what the story demands, it doesn't have to all look the same. We seem to think it all has to look the same, but it doesn't, and this is the perfect example of that.

Sydnee: Well, and I think it also— You've gotta understand like I think it's respecting the limits of if you are telling a fantasy story where people do things that we don't— we can't do in real life. [chuckles]

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: In ways that we can't do them in real life, you have to then come to a decision like, "Can I craft that using real humans and I mean CGI? Or... if I use animation where I— it's limitless, I can do anything with it, is that a better depiction of it, and will that give you that sense more fully?"

„Cause you know, I mean you have to like— If it's a— If it's fantastic elements, you have— you're gonna have to blunt them somewhat with live action, right?

Taylor: Right.

Sydnee: Like you can only do so much with actual humans involved.

Taylor: Well or else everything is rendered, which you know, there's always that disconnect, but... like... It's a fully fictional universe, it's just so fleshed out, I mean I don't—

The worldbuilding in this. I can see where a lot of the influences come in, and it's like you know, it feels a little *Fifth Element*, but that also is kind of a little *Blade Runner*.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And it's like all of that stuff is just so— It's like that gritty like... fluorescent future.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: That's just so enticing.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: That's like the sort of cyberpunk overlay that's just so nice. And I don't know, the artistic elements of this deserve awards. I don't know what awards this can win, but [chuckles] it did deserve it.

Sydnee: And it's interesting too, „cause I feel like it— the— you're referencing these visions of the future that are from like older pieces of media, right.

Taylor: Yeah, absolutely.

Sydnee: Which, I mean, I'm assuming this is all recent stuff.

Taylor: Well yeah, I mean this is recent, but I do think there is that sort of retro-futurist element where you're dealing with a civilization that was not as advanced, and then became advanced because of magic, and they kind of— It's not steampunk.

Sydnee: No.

Taylor: But it is something in that realm of like—

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: — if the future happened in the past, does that make sense?

Sydnee: Yeah, no I— that— I agree with you, because I do think we had a moment back when like in the, you know, *Blade Runner* and *Fifth Element* and stuff you're talking about, where that was the future we saw. [chuckles]

Taylor: I—

Sydnee: And I—

Taylor: Yeah. [chuckles]

Sydnee: I don't think we would paint that now, right?

Taylor: No.

Sydnee: Like if somebody was like, "Draw what the future looks like right now," it would not be that. So it's interesting to see like a modern depiction of like, "Well, what if the future still was this sort of... like..." I don't know, it is, it's like a steampunk like... weird mechanical gadgets, but also there's magic, but also there's like high-tech weaponry. You know, like it's a weird... But then some people are kind of in robes sometimes. Like you know? [chuckles]

Taylor: [chuckles] Well—

Sydnee: Like you know? Like some people dress like it's still like a Roman senate, like I don't know.

Taylor: I think I mean technically, if we're talking about Viktor, he took Jace's bed sheets.

Sydnee: [chuckles]

Taylor: Made them into a robe, but they're not boyfriends, they're just bros.

Sydnee: [chuckles] Well he needed „em to start his cult.

Taylor: Yeah. Magical cults, that's, I don't know. I— If I don't have any complaints about the show, but I do feel like if I have one, it's that there's

just so much and then some of it felt not rushed, but just like, "Can we spend more time understanding [chuckles] what happened here?"

Sydnee: It is— It was a lot. It was like... Yeah, I mean there is a lot to— I was sitting there trying to think like, "How would I describe the plot of this show?" Man, it would take a while to like rundown the "Now hold on, let me tell you about this other character and what they did, and then—" [chuckles] Hello Jack.

Taylor: Yeah, sorry.

Sydnee: Jack has entered the show.

Taylor: Yeah, well the— and I mean I think that the central storyline is around the two sisters just, you know, sort of... that is where most of the plot focuses. But then there's, I don't know, international politics, there's like lots of... conquest. It's a very—

Sydnee: There's drugs.

Taylor: That, yeah, there are drugs. And even that, like I mean talking about morally grey characters, like I love the character of Silco. I know he's supposed to be a bad guy, but he's also like a good father figure for Jinx.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And you know, that's— So it's great to see a show that doesn't feel the need to say, "These are the good guys, these are the bad guys," it's just I think it's more a lesson of one, war is a loss for everybody.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And two, it doesn't matter where you come from or what you do, anybody is capable of great good or great evil, which are beliefs I... believe in. [chuckles]

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. Yeah, and I do think— I mean, it does continue this sort of conversation that we've had on the show about like how more and more media is talking about that the nature of bad and good people, what are— what is evil? What is right, what is wrong? And then how do you

conduct yourself in a world where... the definition of right and wrong has started to become warped.

I feel like this is a— gonna be a really important question in our society here in this country for a while. If the rule of law is evil, you know, if the— And I don't mean like as a whole, but I mean like if you're being asked to follow a rule that is— that in your mind is evil, then what is right? How does one conduct oneself in a—

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: — in a morally righteous way?

Taylor: Well I— Yeah. I was gonna say we're kind of already there.
[chuckles]

Sydnee: Yeah. Well I mean I just think— I think it's gonna become more and more pressing. And I mean again, I don't think these are also not unprecedented because I think you could make the argument that like there were lots of media, *Star Wars* immediately springs to mind, having that same conversation, right?

Taylor: Mm.

Sydnee: Like. [chuckles] We've been thinking about this stuff for a long time. Maybe we just weren't saying it so openly.

Taylor: Well and I mean it's a— is the takeaway— „Cause I always, I don't know, I— Maybe I'm a bit of a cynic that I feel like if... If media is allowed to be seen by the mainstream, there has to be something that's benefiting the people in power.

But you do your best to sneak in a message that benefits the people that aren't in power. And I think the idea that like... your heroes won't be perfect is an important... lesson.

Sydnee: Yes. Yeah, no.

Taylor: Anyone that's willing to help... is on your side.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. Yeah. No, I think that's a really important lesson. In a lot of the work that I do in our local community, I have to— I mean, I have allies that we don't necessarily share all the same worldview.
[chuckles]

But they're my allies in this work that I do, and so... we work together. We don't necessarily spend our Sunday mornings the same way, but we work together.

Taylor: [chuckles] Well—

Sydnee: [chuckles] And that's fine with me, I don't have a problem with that.

Taylor: Yeah.

[pause]

Sydnee: But... But I really enjoyed it, Justin really enjoyed it. It's the kinda show that he would always like us to watch, but usually I'm the one who's like...

Taylor: [chuckles]

Sydnee: I don't know, like by the end of the day, we often have so little time to watch TV that I'm like, "Turn on some baking show that I don't have to think about," like I just wanna turn my brain off, you know what I mean?

Taylor: That's fair. I feel like this is fun enough that even though it is— like the big picture is big, I think episodically it's still fun.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. No it is, it was fun to watch. It was clever, it was well written. Like I said, it was beautiful to look at. I enjoyed it, I enjoyed the punch lesbian very much.

Taylor: [chuckles] That's really just— That was all, I just wanted you to see the— I thought you would just like— like a punch lesbian.

Sydnee: Yeah. I know, I—

Teylor: If you ever wanna make a cosplay Syd, I'll— I'm— Well, you know.

Sydnee: [chuckles]

Teylor: You could hit me up. [chuckles] Don't hit me up though.

Sydnee: I would have to— No.

Teylor: But hit me up.

Sydnee: I would have to have your help, I don't think I could pull that off, you've seen my Halloween costumes, it's just like whatever I have in my closet.

Teylor: I made you one.

Sydnee: Well yeah you did. See, there you go, that's the only good one I've ever worn. [chuckles]

Teylor: I'm good at making stuff. [chuckles]

Sydnee: I got a lot of compliments on that one. I know you are. I— Listen! You don't ha— I've been complimenting you the whole episode on how useful you'd be in an apocalypse because of your resourcefulness and creativity.

Teylor: Well and no one's worried about cosplaying punchy lesbians in the apocalypse. Maybe they should be, but they're not. [chuckles]

Sydnee: No, but there's a lot of— That sort of ability to construct and build and create is infinitely useful. Give yourself more credit.

Teylor: Well. I'm glad you watched the show. I'm glad you enjoyed it. I know it was a lot, but I hope it was worth it.

Sydnee: It was, it was, thank you.

Teylor: Thank you.

Sydnee: And what are we watchin' next?

Taylor: Uh... Oh, well well— There's a movie that came out recently that I guess was made for our generation, by the younger generation. It's *Y2K*.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: It's a horror movie set on the night of... I— 1990— The last day of 1999, and it's very silly, but I think you will— I watched it with our mom when I was home over Christmas, and I think you will enjoy all of the—

I don't— All of the reference to our gen— I don't know who it's made for. It feels like a primer for younger people to learn about our culture. But I think you'll enjoy it.

Sydnee: Well excellent, I'm excited to watch it. Alright, so we'll watch *Y2K* for next week, in the meantime, I would recommend *Arcane* if you haven't watched it, it's really good. You would enjoy it. You don't have to binge it all at once like I did, but I would highly recommend it.

And thank you listeners. Thank you Tey for the recommendation. You should all go to maximumfun.org for more shows that you would enjoy, and thank you to the Nouvellas for our theme song, Baby You Change Your Mind.

[theme music fades in]

Taylor: This has been *Still Buffering*, a cross-generational guide to the culture that made us.

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Sydnee: I am still buffering.

Taylor: And I am, too.

Sydnee: That was good, that was very smooth.

[outro theme music plays]

Taylor: The music is really good to in *Arcane*. I didn't talk about it.

Sydnee: The music.

Taylor: Right?

Sydnee: Yes, the music's very good. It's very— It helps with the emotional response, like it made me cry.

Taylor: I thought, because there are so many upbeat songs, I put on the soundtrack to run to one day, and then it was just... There were so many emotional songs. [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeeeeeah.

Taylor: I'm like, "Wait, no."

Sydnee: No.

Taylor: And I just keep—

Sydnee: No.

Taylor: — replaying that same one song that's upbeat, „cause everything else is a bummer.

Sydnee: Yup.

Taylor: But it's good.

Sydnee: It's very good.

--

Jordan: It's hard to explain what happens on *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*

Jesse: So I had my kids do it.

Speaker One: Saying swear words.

Jesse: Saying swear words.

Speaker Two: Yeah, um... Bad jokes.

Jesse: Bad jokes?

Speaker Two: Bad jokes.

Speaker Three: Maybe it's like you tell people that you're gonna interview them, and then you just... stay there like really quiet, and try and creep them out.

Speaker Two: [laughs]

Speaker One: It's just really boring.

Jesse: Because of Jordan, right, not me.

Speaker One: Because of both of you.

Jesse: Oh.

Jordan: Subscribe to *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*

Jesse: A comedy show for grownups.

[ukulele chord]

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