

Wonderful! 379: Alternate Suite of Etiquette Expectations

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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: And ding, ding, ding, that's the alarm that goes off to warn you, the listener, that the one you're gonna hear right now, it has the makings of having pretty big sleepover energy.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: The vibe I'm getting, that I'm feeling in the room right now, is big, sort of silly, sort of tired, sleepover energy.

Rachel: And/or like an NPR kind of like drive time.

Griffin: Oh, yeah. Tender.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Tender and mild.

Rachel: Yeah. Just kind of like a, we're sharing a story about—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Your local shop that sells a certain kind of plant.

Griffin: Yeah—oh, god, babe, you're serving it up so hot right now.

Rachel: That you can't get anywhere else in Maryland.

Griffin: The breathy thing that you're doing right now is spectacular.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: It's wonderful for me. That's my Small Wonder, is the voice you just did. I've never heard it before like that.

Rachel: We talk to Julia Stevenson about this plan.

Griffin: It's great, babe. It's great. I'm gonna put on this clip of Wonderful at night, when it's time to go to sleep, because I felt so soothed and nurtured and taken good care of.

Rachel: I also revealed my secret desire to be—

Griffin: An NPR voice?

Rachel: Yes, but my name is too boring.

Griffin: Well, you could go back to Winer?

Rachel: That's something.

Griffin: It's like, it certainly stands out.

Rachel: I would have to throw in my middle name too, like I need more syllables in there.

Griffin: Yeah. You have a kickass middle name.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Gadzooks.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Rachel's middle name is named after the store, Gadzooks.
[chuckles] I had to warn y'all, it's gonna be a silly one. It's late. It's 9:05.
Which is late for us, shut up.

Rachel: My parents met inside a Gadzooks.

Griffin: It's true.

Rachel: They were both buying novelty hats.

Griffin: They both were buying tuxedo T-shirts that also said "female body inspector" on them.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: They were both buying them. It was really amazing. Do you—I—this is the fourth piece of recorded content I've made today. I want to explain another reason why I might have some sleep energy, and why I sound so smoky deep.

Rachel: Can you imagine my life that involves only making just this piece—

Griffin: Just the one, yeah.

Rachel: Of recorded content.

Griffin: I mean, a lot of people ask, "How do—the McElroys, they have it all?" And they're like, "How do they do it? Work, love, life, family, how do they do it—how do they—how do you do it all?" And the answer is, sometimes it piles up in a really major way on a—just on a Tuesday.

[group chuckle]

Griffin: And you end up doing all your shit.

Rachel: Uh-huh?

Griffin: And then wonderful is... this one. And I'm so excited to be here in the studio. I did not feel like recording a podcast after our son put up such a huge fight in going to bed. But now that we're here and we're in it, and we have these warm cups of lovely tea, I feel like—

Rachel: What kind of tea are we drinking tonight?

Griffin: This one is blueberry wild child from the Tiesta Tea Company. They're not a sponsor, but...

Rachel: They should be! It's so delicious.

Griffin: It is a great product that they make. Do you have any Small Wonders? I feel like we've talked about nine or ten different things that we actually, genuinely like quite a bit.

Rachel: Yeah! Cherries are in season right now.

Griffin: Dude, stone fruit season is now—I have never eaten a cherry as delicious as the ones you gave me last night.

Rachel: It was so delightful. Griffin and I do not consume a lot of produce. Part of that is just, we have two young children who, just by law, do not consume—

Griffin: A ton of it.

Rachel: Much in the way of fruits or vegetables.

Griffin: I love an apple, that's about—that's about as far as I go.

Rachel: Yeah. And so, I... I purchased these cherries. They had a little helpful sign that said "in season." And I said, okay, thanks for the reminder.

And I was so excited to share these with Griffin. And last night, he dove in, and he was so excited.

Griffin: Yeah! No, I mean, I've never—it's been a long time since I've eaten cherries, because every time I've eaten cherries, they've been like really sour and sort of unpleasant. But these cherries were on a whole 'nother level. I do want to say, because it has been so long since I've eaten cherries, I did eat 'em like a big, messy bear.

[group chuckle]

Griffin: I did—I did—I stood up when we were done, and we were about to go to bed. And I had a huge, red stain on my nice Soul Coughing tour shirt, that Rachel got me as like a Father's Day present, and my nice pair of shorts. Both irreparably stained.

Rachel: Yeah, Griffin—

Griffin: My fingers, my face, I—it was like I—

Rachel: Griffin was like—

Griffin: Had gotten lost in a patch or something.

Rachel: Like, "Oh, I forgot how much cherry stained your fingers." And I looked down at my hands, and my hands were clean. And I was like, "How did you get your fingers stained?"

Griffin: Yeah, I mean, I didn't—I was sort of eating it like an apple, I guess? I didn't—

Rachel: Yeah...

Griffin: I didn't—you have the skill to just pop the whole thing out and spit the pit out.

Rachel: There's no reason for that?

Griffin: To eat it like an apple? I'm worried I'm gonna chomp the pit and hurt my tooth, or swallow it, and a cherry tree grows inside me. That's it. That's the truth of the matter.

Rachel: And then a little tiny stomach George Washington will have to go in there and chop it down.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And he'll have to tell everyone about it.

Griffin: I have a fun note on my phone that is related to this topic. This is my Small Wonder, you reminded me of this.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: And it's from December 29th, 2022. And I think I was kind of high when—I know I was kind of high when I wrote it.

Rachel: Uh-huh?

Griffin: But it is related to the topic. Do you want to read just the whole note out loud? You could do it as like your Poetry Corner voice, if you wanted to.

Rachel: Oh, yeah, I kind of remember when you wrote this. I mean, I think this exists. Have we talked about the fact that this poem exists?

Griffin: Yeah, no, I mean, we haven't talked about it anywhere on recorded record.

Rachel: Okay. "I just came up with this sick idea. They should make a calendar that shows you when different fruits are in season. Parentheses, I am high."

Griffin: I had to leave the last part for myself as like a—

Rachel: That should definitely, like and probably does actually exist.

Griffin: Oh, absolutely. They definitely make a calendar that tells you when different fruits are in season. That's—

Rachel: I think I've seen that like as an image you can get on a Google image search.

Griffin: I've never bothered doing it.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: So disinterested am I in hunting down positive fruit experiences.

Rachel: But December 2022, what could you have possibly—

Griffin: December 29th! It was post-Christmas, I was—

Rachel: What could you have been eating late December that would have been in season?

Griffin: Yeah, that's a good point. What could I possibly—maybe we were watching a documentary about nectarines or something.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: And I was stoned out of my gourd.

Rachel: We were probably watching like a Top Chef style program—

Griffin: Maybe that's what it was, and I was—

Rachel: Was like a bunch of chefs sourcing like—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: You know, the best quality.

Griffin: And I probably said something like, "Oh, those grapes look nice. When are those in season?" And then I was like, I—there's no way to know. You just gotta wait until the grocery store tells you.

Rachel: Yeah, there's a little helpful sign.

Griffin: Yeah. But that calendar does exist, you don't need to send it to us, folks, we—I know. I know. That's why—

Rachel: Well, I mean, you can send it to us? I'm not gonna be mad about it.

Griffin: If you wanna send us a fruit calendar, I mean, we don't—we don't even have a PO Box anymore—

Rachel: We don't—we don't have a way to receive it.

Griffin: But like, I guess you could just send us—

Rachel: I bet if you sent it to Justin McElroy, he'd be just as happy to receive it.

Griffin: I don't want to stuff Justin's fuckin' PO box with fruit calendars, man.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: That seems like—those things gotta be thick, man. I can't fill up—the PO—the people at the Huntington post office already get mad enough at Justin for the—for the stuff he accrues at their facility.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: What's your big topic to discuss today?

Rachel: My big topic is—that's—that's our—the new name of our show?

Griffin: I don't know, baby, I'm tired. Go easy.

Rachel: Big, big topic. Mine, fitting with the mood and the vibe and just the energy of the evening, is a trip to the Poetry Corner.

Griffin: [sings a tune] Sha-cha-cha-cha-cha-cha-cha-jun-jun-jun-jun-jun-jun, pa-cha-cha-cha. Di-pappa-di-pappa-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da. Sometimes I take it to Family Matters.

Rachel: Yeah! It seemed like it there for a second.

Griffin: [sings] Days go by! Is a... it's a better love of family.

Rachel: You don't get enough recognition—

Griffin: [sings] Pa-pa-pa-pa-pa.

Rachel: For your vocal range.

Griffin: I have a certain fondness for family sitcom theme songs of the era.

Rachel: Yeah?

Griffin: I mean, one of my karaoke standbys whenever we were hanging out with our friends, Justin and Bristol, was busting out the Growing Pains.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: The Growing Pains duet with her as a—as a karaoke treat. That song fuckin' goes down smooth every time.

Rachel: Yeah. I mean, one of my favorite things about Bristol was the sincerity that she brought to performing that.

Griffin: She's still around. You said "was," like she probably—she is still around.

Rachel: Well, we haven't done karaoke with her—

Griffin: That's true, yeah.

Rachel: In a very, very long time.

Griffin: That's true. Anyway!

Rachel: So, this is a poet by the name of Dorianne Laux. And she's a poet that I was not familiar with until today, when I dove into my poetry vault.

Griffin: Yeah. That's real!

Rachel: Like Scrooge McDuck.

Griffin: Yeah, it's—Rachel kind of like knocked out the floor of one of our bathrooms.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: Thus connecting it to the den below. And she said, "This is now a two-story vault." And she fills it with poems, and jumps in it.

Rachel: I jump in. Yeah.

Griffin: It's a lot of square footage of the house, honestly, babe, that we could use for other stuff.

Rachel: It's tricky too, because of the paper cut danger.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And obviously, I could access all of this digitally.

Griffin: You did you not need it, yeah, absolutely not.

Rachel: But the Scrooge McDuck call is so—

Griffin: You say it feels good—you say it feels good to have 'em all over.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Mm-hm. That's what I say.

[group chuckle]

Griffin: Oh, man...

Rachel: This is a... a poet born 1952, in Maine. She is one of those poets that had a lot of kind of odd jobs prior to breaking into the poetry field. She was the manager of a gas station. She was a maid. She was a, quote, 'donut holer.'

Griffin: Yeah, that's important. That's an important job.

Rachel: Which I didn't... I didn't really think about was a discrete position.

Griffin: How do you think they get in there?

Rachel: Well, I assumed if you worked at an establishment that served donuts, there wasn't a person that was just in charge of the holes.

Griffin: Like the elves? Do you think the elves are holing the donuts?

Rachel: I assumed it was like you did the whole process. I didn't assume there was one person—

Griffin: Yeah, someone does—someone does the whole process.

Rachel: Just the holes.

Griffin: Yeah. Just the holes, please.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: "What's your job?"
"Holes."

Rachel: "Just holes."

Griffin: "I'm the holes one at the donut store."

Rachel: Mm-hm. I mean, it's not a donut without 'em.

Griffin: That's true! It's a... it's a... it's bread. It's just bread.

Rachel: Mm-hm. She actually, she didn't find her way to poetry. So, she was born in 1952. Her first book, from what I can tell, didn't come out until 1990.

Griffin: Wow, that's so much longer.

Rachel: She—yeah, she found her way to poetry a little bit later, started taking kind of adult courses at the community college, and kind of found her way to poetry. She got her Bachelor's in 1988, and then kind of found her way to poetry after that.

Griffin: Fucking' rad.

Rachel: Yeah. And... yeah, her poems are very accessible, very... very positive. I thought it would be kind of nice to share... hm, maybe—I was thinking maybe two, maybe one? I don't know. If I don't share both, I will give the title of the other, so you can access it.

Griffin: Hunt it down yourself. Just kidding, it's locked up in Rachel's vault.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Sometimes Rachel has poets write poems that she only puts in the vault and does not let them publish elsewhere. And I think that that is sort of contrary to the spirit of the whole enterprise.

Rachel: Okay. Again, this is Dorianne Laux, the poem is For the Sake of Strangers.

"No matter what the grief, its weight,
we are obliged to carry it.
We rise and gather momentum, the dull strength
that pushes us through crowds.
And then the young boy gives me directions
so avidly. A woman holds the glass door open,
waiting patiently for my empty body to pass through.
All day it continues, each kindness
reaching toward another—a stranger
singing to no one as I pass on the path, trees
offering their blossoms, a child
who lifts his almond eyes and smiles.
Somehow they always find me, seem even
to be waiting, determined to keep me
from myself, from the thing that calls to me
as it must have once called to them—
this temptation to step off the edge
and fall weightless, away from the world."

Griffin: That's what I'm talking about!

Rachel: Isn't that lovely?

Griffin: That's the good stuff right there. It's all good—I mean, you only bring the like top tier shit to this show and it's audience, and that's lovely.

That one really—that one hit me right in the good spot. Right when I needed it.

Rachel: She... I mean... the thing I really appreciate about her writing is that she... she doesn't start super big and get small. She starts pretty small.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But finds a way to kind of bring weight to it.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: She gave this interview in Writer's Digest, in 2008, that talks about this idea of writing what you know. And she says, "As I get older, I become more and more sure that I know absolutely nothing. I thought I knew about love, about death, about motherhood, men. I know nothing. I can only guess how much less I'll know 10 years from now. But I do know my backyard, my street, the way light bounces off a car windshield in summer, how frost glazes the roses when they are fooled into bud in February. I don't know who we humans are, or why we're here, or where we're going, but I want to. I think those eternal questions continue to be asked in spite of their mystery, because of their mystery. I explore those questions by looking deeply into the things I do know, the visible, touchable world. So often young poets try to speak to those mysteries directly, and unless they happen to be Rilke, they more often fail."

Griffin: [chuckles]

Rachel: "It seems to me that the world is a pathway, a conduit to the invisible, the unknowable, and helps us translate what we feel through the bodies we touch and that touch us." I feel like that was such a good reminder, because I—

Griffin: You don't need to read a second poem now, by the way.

Rachel: I know—[laughs]

Griffin: I feel like that's—

Rachel: Hey now. [laughs]

Griffin: Like, that's a freebie, almost.

Rachel: I know. This is one of those interviews that must have been done like through email. Because I'm like, man, there's no way she just like spit that out of her mouth.

Griffin: You can't freestyle that, yeah, holy shit.

Rachel: No way!

Griffin: I do also love how she referred to the leaves as being glazed with dew, which made me think that she's still got a lot of that donut DNA kind of kicking around in there.

Rachel: [chuckles] "How frost glazes the roses when they are fooled into bud in February."

Griffin: Yeah. I mean, that's great stuff, but I know where your head was at, and it was back in the donut mines.

Rachel: For—[chuckles] For me, that has been like, or can be, what is so terrifying about writing, is that you have this big thing you want to get to. And it is so tempting to like push your way there.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: Instead of writing in a place you feel comfortable. And if you end up there, great. And so this is just like such a reminder of just like, just don't be afraid to stay in that space that is familiar.

Griffin: Yeah! For sure.

Rachel: You know, and kind of trust that you will get something out of that. The other poem I was going to read is called Evening. You can find that—it's from 2019—easily enough if you just search for Evening and Dorianne Laux. Her last name is spelled L-A-U-X. But she's written six collections of poetry. Her most recent book is a textbook she wrote called Finger Exercises for Poets.

Griffin: Oh, shit.

Rachel: Which I kind of love. It's just this, it's like writing prompts. And she's like—she was a teacher for a long time, and may continue to be a teacher in creative writing programs. And I love the idea of like selling writing exercises as finger exercises.

Griffin: That's great.

Rachel: It's like kind of taking out the intimidation of it.

Griffin: Mm-hm!

Rachel: Just being like, here is something to do with your hands that will hopefully turn into poetry. [chuckles]

Griffin: I love it.

Rachel: But yeah! That's my—that's my trip to the Poetry Corner.

Griffin: How do you spell her first name?

Rachel: Oh, good question. Dorianne, D-O-R-I-A-N-N-E.

Griffin: Okay, I would not—

Rachel: Laux, L-A-U-X.

Griffin: Would not have gotten there. But that's wonderful and easily Googleable now. Thank you so much. Can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yes.

[theme music plays]

[ad break]

Griffin: I'd like to take you somewhere for my segment, if I may. I would like to take you [sings] to the boardwalk. Boardwalk.

Rachel: Aw, that's fun.

Griffin: [sings] 'Having some fun!' Is the—I want to talk—I do want to talk about the boardwalk. I was going to talk about the beach, because surprisingly, the only beach representation we really have on this show is a segment I did a long time ago about how good it is to go home from the beach.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Like how good it is to take the shower and take the nap.

Rachel: I mean, it's a big topic to take on.

Griffin: The beach—that's why I'm not. I don't want to only do the beach. The beach—I don't want it to be, though, that the only thing we've ever talked about the beach is how good it is to leave the beach. Because I also like being at the beach.

Rachel: I feel like we talked about that, or at least I brought that up when you were like, "My favorite part of the beach is leaving the beach."
[chuckles]

Griffin: Well, maybe I felt that then, but now I'm older and...

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: Wiser. And the father of two children.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: And watching these beautiful boys do their thing—finding them a bunch of cool-looking shells. Guys, I found some true dandies.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Some gorgeous pearlescent purple-hued bivalves.

Rachel: Just like the size of your palm. Just giant.

Griffin: Just fucking gargantuan. I had to wander into some pretty atrocious... foam to get in there. Some real, real wake that was really bashing me in. But I got what I needed.

Rachel: Some gnarly—

Griffin: Some gnarly chodes.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: But I want to focus on the boardwalk, because there's something about a boardwalk that I found very transportive, very magical.

Rachel: Can I tell you, I think I have maybe zero boardwalk experience. I mean, okay, so here's the thing. Like, obviously, we have been to the wharf here in DC.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: Which has like a boardwalk quality.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: I can't remember if that brief sojourn we took to Redondo Beach, if there was a boardwalk?

Griffin: We definitely went on the Redondo Beach Boardwalk, because we were desperately looking for filming locations of The O.C. And we failed fuckin' miserably.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But we still did go on a boardwalk there.

Rachel: But I will say that, yeah, my boardwalk experience is really limited.

Griffin: As is mine! The most boardwalk experience we've had is the last couple of years, including last week, we went on trips to Rehoboth!

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Rehoboth Beach, up in Delaware. And honestly, it was a lovely trip, both times. Super easy, super chill. But Rehoboth is mostly known for its boardwalk, which extends for—alongside a mile of beach. And it plays host to just a metric shit ton of mostly small businesses that offer, you know, the nearby beach goers either beach essentials or candy or French fries.

Rachel: And also repeated businesses, which kind of blew my mind.

Griffin: It's absolutely insane the way that a boardwalk will throw multiple businesses at you, two to three blocks apart from each other.

Rachel: The way they're like—yeah, yeah, yeah. It's kind of like a mall that has like two of the same store. Like, it's very similar in that it's like, well, why would you go to the other corner when you have one right on this corner too?

Griffin: Exactly. I don't—I don't have a ton of—I also don't have a ton of boardwalk experience. But every boardwalk I've been in has like an

amusement park sort of quality. Like the density of a French fry restaurants, or like having a like small amusement park slash carnival slash arcade next to another arcade. Like, that doesn't happen elsewhere in nature. That doesn't—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I don't know if city planners like make sure that stuff like that doesn't necessarily happen, but it's absolute—you do not see anywhere else where there are multiple instances of the Thrasher's French fries, making you think like you're in the Matrix.

Rachel: Well, if you think about it, I mean, you and I—I mean, I'm gonna assume your experience is similar to mine and that—at least for me, I grew up in an area where carnivals would pop up in like either, you know, fields—

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: Like where sports would take place.

Griffin: That absolutely happened, yeah.

Rachel: Or like big parking lots. You know, like there wasn't a full year-round location where a carnival type area would be. You know?

Griffin: Yeah, I mean, we had Camden Park, which arguably had carnival-like qualities. This is certainly that as well. It's just like, while you are there, it's like everywhere you look, there's just a big flashing signal reminding you that like you are—this is currently recreation time. You're in a recreational zone, and you are now invited to sort of partake in that.

Rachel: It gives it like a real... it gives it like a real Hallmark movie quality for me. Like it feels very cinematic, and I think that's just because I didn't grow up with a lot of access to it.

Griffin: Sure!

Rachel: So, for me, like when we are there, I feel like I am getting access to like a movie set about a boardwalk. [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah, it is—it's—it is strange—it's strange to me still that you can live in a town that has the—that has the ocean in it, and just go to the ocean whenever you want.

Rachel: I know!

Griffin: That is still a pretty alien concept to me. The idea that you can just sort of work at a business overlooking the ocean, you can work at a French fry stand next to the ocean... I don't know, or go there while you're at the beach. It solves a big problem of mine, the boardwalk, it solves it a problem I have with the beach. Which is that while you're on the beach, you are so far away from everything that you need to fulfill your basic human needs.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Which means you have to fuckin' haul a... you know, a whole racing sled to the beach with all of your belongings in it if you want to have any kind of extended stay. Not at the boardwalk where you can just go and you can buy, you know, there's not a ton of options, but a slice of pizza. You can use a bathroom, probably. You can do a claw machine game that has sometimes truly, truly reprehensible amounts of lack of claw strength.

Rachel: [chuckles] People will also be in like varying states of beach around you.

Griffin: Yes, that is what I also find so charming, and I don't want to say this in a judgmental way. But there is an alternate suite of etiquette expectations.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Like, you are going to be tracking in sand to these—or water into these businesses. And you may or may not have a shirt on. And you might be—you might have drank a whole bunch—a hundred beers. And I'm saying

I guess in general that that kind of stuff is more permissible at a boardwalk than a non—

Rachel: Well, and I will say, part of the reason we enjoy Rehoboth is that it is very targeted, I think, towards families with children.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: So, that may be coloring our experience of it.

Griffin: You can—

Rachel: There's definitely a lot, at least in our experience so far, a lot less rowdy patrons. It's more focused on like, you know, families like...

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Trying to get their kid the stuffed animal they want.

Griffin: You could buy a Mr. Beast chocolate bar at one Candy Kitchen, and then step outside and throw it, and hit the other Candy Kitchen with the Mr. Beast chocolate bar.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: They're so close together.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: But I do like it. I find it so—I find it so unique and so delightful. Humans have been building pathways of wood for a long time. One of the first ones that was discovered—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I do like this, was found in England, and it's called the Sweet Track. And it was made—they carbon dated it specifically to 3807 BCE. I didn't know technology could get it that fuckin' dialed in.

Rachel: Whoa!

Griffin: But it's called the Sweet Track. It's like a mile-long track that goes over some marshland, connecting like an island to the other side of the marshland. And it was found by a guy named Ray Sweet. Can you imagine? "I'm Ray Sweet, and this is my ancient boardwalk that I found. We're gonna call it the Sweet Track."

Rachel: Man...

Griffin: What a cool life. Anyway, what we now kind of recognize as like boardwalk as entertainment zone, in America, at least did begin in Atlantic City.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Originally, the boardwalks there were built for the hotels that were beachside, to keep sort of guests from tracking in as much sand.

Rachel: Yeah, that makes sense.

Griffin: But they were temporary installations. They would sort of like put out this boardwalk, you know, in the busy summertime months. And then when they had fewer guests, they would take it down, you know, for the—for the winter season. But eventually they just decided like, "Hey, let's invest a little bit more in this and make it a permanent thing, because people use it a lot, and it helps keep our floors clean." And the more they developed it out, like the more businesses came down, until eventually, you know, Atlantic City becomes as much of an attraction as the beach—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That it surrounds. That's really all I have about boardwalk. I have not been to Atlantic City. I have not been to the Jersey Shore. From what I understand—

Rachel: Yeah, same.

Griffin: They really... they really have specialized in this.

Rachel: You and—you and I are not like professionals in beach.

Griffin: Not at all.

Rachel: I would say you definitely—

Griffin: Extreme amateurs.

Rachel: You definitely have a lot more beach experience than me.

Griffin: And that's fucking tragic.

Rachel: I know. Well, my first beach experience was Virginia Beach, for just a very short amount of time, when I was like in... high school maybe?

Griffin: It's a fine beach. I don't know that it's the most sort of iconic beach. I don't know that you're getting like the quintessential...

Rachel: No.

Griffin: I'm not gonna shit talk Virginia Beach here, I'm sure we have friends—

Rachel: No, I'm just saying like... every time I experience beach, it is novel to me. It feels like I have—I have traveled into a different planet.

Griffin: Cool.

Rachel: You know?

Griffin: Yeah, for sure. You have!

Rachel: So the idea that there would be stores and restaurants on that planet—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Is like extra delightful.

Griffin: And it's so, so good.

Rachel: And then like little weird stuffed animal toys. And like, you know, I don't know, it's just—

Griffin: Carnival games.

Rachel: It's just so charming.

Griffin: I do love it. I do love it a lot.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And so do our boys, which is very wonderful as well.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: We have some submissions from our friends at home. You can email your submissions to wonderfulpodcast@gmail.com. Keep it short, keep it tight, and maybe we'll consider it for the show. Like this one from Ash, who says, "My Small Wonder is when you drop a physical book, or generally close it without putting the bookmark in it, and you manage to open it back to the exact page you were on. It's like the universe wants you to keep reading. Thanks." I don't know if that thanks was for us or the universe... but I

always just kind of assumed like your hand oils or whatever like mark the like—how a magician marks a card with their hand oils.

Rachel: Well, I mean, it'll fold in the spine sometimes.

Griffin: Could be the fold in the spine. It could be the universe! I do not want to shit on someone's like vision board, or whatever. It may—

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: It may very well be the universe.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: But I also do like that. I don't read a ton of physical books these days.

Rachel: No, not anymore.

Griffin: So, here's another one from... Julia, who says, "My Small Wonder is the informative pictures on U-Haul trucks. It's nice to learn something fascinating unexpectedly, especially when it comes with an adorable, artistic rendering of a rare salamander."

Rachel: This is so true!

Griffin: "When I looked it up, I found out that the trucks represent states and provinces, while the trailers represent cities. Here's the page, if you're interested." And there's a link to U-Hauls 'super graphics.' That's what they call 'em. Yeah, that kicks ass.

Rachel: I know. It does make me feel like—

Griffin: I scope it every—I clock it every time.

Rachel: I know, me too!

Griffin: You got to.

Rachel: Just like, "Ooh! Look at that!"

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I bet there's people who like collect, like pictures of—pictures of those trucks. Like, "Oh, I saw a great Nebraska one today."

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: "I'm still missing—I'm still missing the Omaha trailer." Thank you so much for listening to our show. Thank you 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. Thanks to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. Go to maximumfun.org, check out all the great stuff they have over there.

We have a live MBMBaM and live TAZ next week. We're going to be doing MBMBaM and TAZ Dadlands in Anaheim, and then we're coming to Sacramento for a MBMBaM there the day after. You can get tickets still at bit.ly/mcelroytours. And then we've got some other MBMBaMs and TAZs coming up later in the year, in Atlanta and Texas and Salt Lake City and... some other places. And you can come see us, and it'll be a lot of fun.

I think that's it. Do you have—do we—is there any other stuff? I'm proud of us.

Rachel: You've got like, merch?

Griffin: We've got some new stuff in the merch store. There's a "Why Not a Wizard" pin and "Fuck Off, King" pin. Both designed by Evan Crews. They're both wonderful. We have a "Don't do a hit" bumper magnet that I actually do—I would like to put on our automobile.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I feel like a bumper magnet is so non-committal and it's—it is a great—it's a great message.

Rachel: It is!

Griffin: We got a 20 Thunder Drive pin, all kinds of great stuff. And 10% of all merch proceeds this month will be donated to the Immigrant Defenders Law Center. All that's over at mcelroymerch.com. Thank you so much. Thank you for listening. Join us again next week for a daytime episode. We're gonna be back to serious business then.

Rachel: Yeah! We—there's been a lot of travel recently. We didn't have an episode last week because of—

Griffin: We are very sorry.

Rachel: Said travel. But we are...

Griffin: We're here.

Rachel: We're trying to get our lives back in order.

Griffin: [chuckles] We're here now, for like eight more days, and then I am going—and I am hitting the road again.

Rachel: And you are—you are hitting the road again.

Griffin: We will try to keep this ship on the rails. The ship rails.

Rachel: The ship—yes, uh-huh.

Griffin: The special rails that...

Rachel: The rails for ships.

Griffin: The rails for the ships that go in the ocean.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: Good night, everybody!

Rachel: [chuckles]

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

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