

## **Wonderful! 390: We'll Smell Some Ice Bags and Get Back to You**

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

**Rachel:** Hi! I'm Rachel McElroy.

**Griffin:** Hey, this is Griffin McElroy.

**Rachel:** And this is Wonderful!

**Griffin:** This is Wonderful, a podcast where we talk about things we like, that is good, that we are into.

[pause]

**Griffin:** And that's going to do it for us this week on Wonderful.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] You've done too much podcasts today.

**Griffin:** I've done too much podcasts in life. When I get to the pearly gates, St. Peter is going to go through my book. He's going to be like, "Looking good, looking good. One question. It seems to me like you did an outsized number of podcasts, just compared to the average sort of individual who has come up in here." And I'll—

**Rachel:** There are—

**Griffin:** I won't have anything to say about that. It's absolutely, objectively true.

**Rachel:** Here's what people forget about I think sometimes, is there are— there are a number of people that have been doing podcasts for a long time.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** You know, like you hear about 'em.

**Griffin:** And I—and I—let me be clear. I hate that.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] When they refer to like the people that were there at the beginning, it—you know, there are people that come up before y'all.

**Griffin:** The old dogs.

**Rachel:** But you have many.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** You have many. It's not just like one that you've been doing for a long time, it's like a lot you've been doing for a long time now.

**Griffin:** Yeah. And some of 'em are short run, and some of 'em we only do on Thanksgiving. And so like, those probably shouldn't be counted in my final heavenly tally. But for the—for the rest of 'em, I mean, it is a—it is quite a bit of podcasting.

**Rachel:** Can I ask you sometimes, like when something happens to you—

**Griffin:** Uh-huh?

**Rachel:** And it's like a nice little anecdote, do you ever think like, "Well, this is really a Besties anecdote." Or, "You know what? I think if I'm going to share this little story, this is going to be a MBMBaM story."

**Griffin:** I mean, I know my audience, right?

**Rachel:** Uh-huh. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** By which I mean the other people I host the podcasts with.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Not like the actual audience. I don't really know them that well.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** But if I, you know, get a story—if there's a story about like, we got a particularly big booger out of Gus' nose to help him sleep better, that's a Besties. Like, I gotta tell my Besties boys about that, because they like that nasty Beetlejuice stuff.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** The MBMBaM crowd is a little too erudite, and I don't know how I would fit that specific sort of story into The Adventure Zone. Maybe if we did like a Garbage Pail Kids season, which I wouldn't put it past us, honestly. But—

**Rachel:** Yeah, I guess I never thought about that. There's not a lot of room for personal anecdotes in Adventure Zone.

**Griffin:** No, there's not, it's... it's when you get into the drama as much as we do—

**Rachel:** Unless your character's like, "Oh, on my travels, I ran into a spectacled man, and he told me a story about his two boys."

**Griffin:** That's cool. Yeah, that's awesome.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Yeah, I would like to make myself sort of endemic to the—to the work. I actually wouldn't like that.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** I like my—I per—I like my privacy. And that's why I do fifteen podcasts a week. Do you have any Small Wonders?

**Rachel:** I'm gonna say—so, today, I got a hankering.

**Griffin:** Okay?

**Rachel:** I don't know if you noticed it when you got home. Went out, bought a fall wreath.

**Griffin:** I saw—I got a Nest Cam sort of like warning that's like, "Hey, someone's in front of your house."

**Rachel:** Someone hung a wreath on your door. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** And I looked and I saw you with a big wreath, like front and center.

**Rachel:** Did you notice it when you brought big son back from school?

**Griffin:** No, I didn't. Did you—

**Rachel:** Wow.

**Griffin:** Did you...

**Rachel:** You walked him straight up the stairs, you opened the front door—

**Griffin:** Didn't notice the wreath?

**Rachel:** Yeah, anyway, I got a fall wreath. I like a seasonal wreath.

**Griffin:** You do.

**Rachel:** I'd kind of fallen off of it, because we did have a family of birds that put a nest in our last one.

**Griffin:** Such a picadillo, that one.

**Rachel:** And it really messed with me, a lot.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** It became a big obstruction, and I fell off wreaths for a long time.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** But this season, man, it feels like this is when you start getting, you know, decoratin'.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** So—

**Griffin:** Well, when you hang a wreath on your door, you are not signing up to have birds shit all over the front of your door.

**Rachel:** Well, it was the baby birds, is what happened.

**Griffin:** The baby birds is rough. Because let me tell you, we were very ginger every time we came into and out of the house—

**Rachel:** I know!

**Griffin:** Which was a little bit annoying. But mostly these fucking guys kept falling into the yard. Like they just kept falling into the yard—

**Rachel:** Well—

**Griffin:** And would be—

**Rachel:** Well, and what happened is I finally got to a point where I thought like, okay, they've most definitely flown the nest. And I decided I'm taking this wreath down. And they had not.

**Griffin:** They had not flown the nest.

**Rachel:** And then we had to kind of like protect them from predators. Which, in my head, I did successfully, but who knows.

**Griffin:** Who can tell? It's birds, baby! Who knows?

**Rachel:** What's your Small Wonder?

**Griffin:** I... my Small Wonder is E Ink. I like E Ink tablets and readers, and shit like that. I just got a new one, and it's like...

**Rachel:** Is that like where the screen's textured?

**Griffin:** It's—well, it's like the screen isn't like... displaying pixels, it's like displaying like ink, right? And so, it's like, gentler on the eyes, it's not like... blasting your eyeballs with light. But this one's like journalist notepad size, like that more—I forget the—it's like A... six? I don't know. One of those.

**Rachel:** [titters]

**Griffin:** One of those sizes. I just really like it; I think it looks good.

**Rachel:** You can fit it in your JNCO pants.

**Griffin:** I can fit it in my JNCO pants if I want. It's got a little stylus. I've got a few of 'em, and... I don't know, I just find the technology very interesting. And I really, really do prefer looking at one of those for extended periods of time—

**Rachel:** It makes sense.

**Griffin:** Over looking at a phone or iPad or whatever.

**Rachel:** Mm-hm.

**Griffin:** You go first this week.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Will you start?

**Rachel:** "Will you start?" [chuckles]

**Griffin:** You start.

**Rachel:** This week... I feel like I'm about to get the hiccups, so I'm really trying to—

**Griffin:** Whoa? You feel like you're about to get the hiccups? Is this one of those things where, if I talk about it, it's gonna make it... happen? Is that—am I manifesting right now? Because I don't want to do that. What do you need me to do? How can I be helpful in this moment? Because I do not want you to get the hiccups on our podcast.

**Rachel:** [titters]

**Griffin:** Have you—did you do your breathing?

**Rachel:** That's what I'm trying to do. Sometimes—

**Griffin:** Box breathing, box breathe—box breathing.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Box breathing.

**Rachel:** Yelling at me will definitely—

**Griffin:** [yells out] Power! Power!

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Box breathing.

**Rachel:** [breathing sounds]

**Griffin:** Good.

**Rachel:** Sometimes when my nose is stuffy, I will breathe through my mouth, and it will make my breathing a little bit irregular, which will cause me to get the hiccups.

**Griffin:** Oh, jeez, man.

**Rachel:** I think this is what happens to big son too, because he also gets the hiccups sometimes for really no reason at all.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Okay, I think I'm okay.

**Griffin:** The only reason you should get the hiccups is if you're an old-timey drunk man.

**Rachel:** [titters] Uh-huh?

**Griffin:** In like a black and white comic strip. And you have to actually say like, "*Hicc*."

**Rachel:** Mm-hm.

**Griffin:** That's the only acceptable reason to have hiccups.

**Rachel:** Or if you're drinking a bubbly soda.

**Griffin:** No, that's a burp—that's a burping job.

**Rachel:** Yeah... some of us don't burp.

**Griffin:** What do you have prepared for the class?

**Rachel:** I have a trip to the Poetry Corner...

**Griffin:** Okay, great! Don't—you don't have to say it like that!

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** I'm excited to go to the poetry corner!

**Rachel:** And you yelled "box breathing" at me so many times.



**Griffin:** [chuckles] And you—I can't help but notice, you didn't box breathe.

**Rachel:** I'm not sure I know what that means?

**Griffin:** Four in, hold four, four out, hold four.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** It's what they do... well, I guess in metal—the Metal Gear Solid video game franchise. That's how I know about that one.

**Rachel:** That's how you know about that?

**Griffin:** Big shouts out to my main man, Jacob Dunkle, my old roommate, who taught me about Metal Gear Solid and box breathing, and all that—all that nano—

**Rachel:** Sometimes—

**Griffin:** Nano machines.

**Rachel:** Sometimes, you present yourself as a real renaissance man, like a man of—like of great knowledge.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** You'll like tell me the names of like old weapons from medieval times and I'd think—

**Griffin:** Uh-huh.

**Rachel:** This man knows everything about everything. And then I'll say, "How did you come upon this knowledge, great man of wisdom?" And you'll say, "Well, there's a video game."

**Griffin:** I'll stop saying that. Next time you're like, "How do you know what a cestus is?" I'll be like, "Uh... museum."

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** The museum of natural weapons...

**Rachel:** "That I went to—"

**Griffin:** That I went to...

**Rachel:** "In..."

**Griffin:** Prague. I went to Prague. The Prague Museum of Natural Weapons.

**Rachel:** It does sound like a real thing.

**Griffin:** The Prague Museum of Natural Weapons?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** What's a natural weapons?

**Rachel:** [titters] I mean... like a stick or a rock or...

**Griffin:** You make me feel like a natural weapon.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** What do you—what's the poet?

**Rachel:** [chuckles] The poet is Maya Popa, which is just a fun name to say.

**Griffin:** It's cool. Yeah, I like that a lot.

**Rachel:** She has her PhD in the University of London. Her thesis was, quote, "Wild Unsayable: Wonder in Romantic and Contemporary Poetry."

**Griffin:** Sounds germane to the topic.

**Rachel:** She writes all about the role of wonder in poetry.

**Griffin:** Wow.

**Rachel:** And I thought, hey, this lady—

**Griffin:** Great fit.

**Rachel:** Right in line—

**Griffin:** Yeah, for sure.

**Rachel:** With our whole thing. She... has two books of poetry, that I could find, anyway. It's very difficult to find a lot on this woman.

**Griffin:** Hm?

**Rachel:** I think partially because she's relatively young. She was born in 1989. She wrote a book in 2019 called *American Faith*, and then another one called *Wound Is the Origin of Wonder*, in 2022. And then since then, she's been doing, you know, a lot of work teaching. She has a Substack, and works online with emerging writers through a platform called Conscious Writers Collective.

**Griffin:** Cool.

**Rachel:** Which is designed to help writers identify and meet their writing and publishing goals.

**Griffin:** Okay?

**Rachel:** And I wanted to read a poem by her called *Dear Life*.

**Griffin:** Great.

**Rachel:** I can't undo all I have done unto myself, what I have let an appetite for love do to me. I have wanted all the world, its beauties and its injuries; some days, I think that is punishment enough. Often, I received more than I'd asked, which is how this works—you fish in open water ready

to be wounded on what you reel in. Throwing it back was a nightmare. Throwing it back and seeing my own face as it disappeared into the dark water. Catching my tongue suddenly on metal, spitting the hook into my open palm. Dear life: I feel that hook today most keenly. Would you loosen the line—you'll listen if I ask you, if you are the sort of life I think you are.

**Griffin:** [snaps fingers in applause]

**Rachel:** Isn't that lovely?

**Griffin:** That is really nice. I don't snap enough for you and I am sorry—I am sorry for that. I'll try—

**Rachel:** Well, it's not my poem, you know?

**Griffin:** Well, yeah... yeah.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Fair point.

**Rachel:** She writes a lot kind of about like a—like a natural experience. And kind of this mysterious interaction with the world.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Which is kind of that wonder that I was talking about.

**Griffin:** I'm always like intrigued by... I don't know, a kind of like metaphysicality in poetry and in writing. Like, and I do not have the words to talk about this, but you know, talking to life, like it is—

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** You know, an audience that is a traditional audience. I don't know, I find that always like really engaging.

**Rachel:** Yeah. So, given that her thesis was on wonder, she has a lot to say about it. There was an interview in McSweeney's in 2023, and she said, "Recollecting wonder on the page presents an inherent generative challenge for poets who must, in a sense, narrate the conditions for wonder while accommodating wonder's inherent disorientation, its sense of surpassing or breaching usual language and life. A poem that too conclusively tries to explain its wonder risks forfeiting the feeling."

And then she goes on to say, "It may seem rather dramatic to suggest that our survival depends on our ability to wonder, but I suspect it is more right than not. A lens of wonder, that is, an approach to the world that acknowledges and values its preciousness, its oneness, and that seeks to safeguard its longevity and prevent its squandering is inherently valuable."

**Griffin:** That's really, really, really good stuff.

**Rachel:** I feel like that should be like our mission statement.

**Griffin:** Put that in the podcast description.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** I think about that a lot, this idea of, while preparing stuff for this show and like talking about stuff for this show, not running the risk of talking about it so much, or talking about it in a way where it kind of loses what makes it so kind of like one wonderful.

**Rachel:** I know! We try—I think we try and do research, because we want to have some information that is—

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Is like, give some context and maybe teaches people something they didn't know, and maybe give some like legitimacy to what we're saying.

**Griffin:** That's not—yes, I don't think that's like ever my main thing—

**Rachel:** But also, like if it's too much like reading from the dictionary, then it's not particularly wonderful anymore. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** No, yeah, like I genuinely only talk about stuff on this show that I—that I like and it's—I think is good and that I am into.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** And I, I don't know, I also—I also think about the fact that like if by talking about this thing, am I going to like make its... specialness like abstract in a way that it no longer is special, or like I can't communicate it effectively. Sometimes I will scrap stuff entirely because it's like, I—there's no way to make clear how much I like this like picture that my friend sent me the other—like I can't possibly do a segment on that, because I can't verbalize that or communicate that.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** But sort of like, I don't know, making space for that I think is important. And—

**Rachel:** Mm-hm.

**Griffin:** Yeah. That was really good.

**Rachel:** Yeah. That's Maya Popa.

**Griffin:** Maya Popa.

**Rachel:** Easy name to remember.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** She's... she's pretty incredible.

**Griffin:** And new, fresh. This is cool because like—

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Then when your friends are like talking about poets, and they're like, "*Meh-meh-meh, Robert Frost,*" you can be like, "I go that new shit."

**Rachel:** I mean, new to me, I'll say.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Like—

**Griffin:** I mean, in the 2020s I think is still—I think it still is—

**Rachel:** When I see somebody who was born in 1989 has a PhD, I'm like, how is that possible? They're so young. And then I actually get in my calculator to see how old that makes them, and then I realize, oh, that's—thirty-six is not...

**Griffin:** No.

**Rachel:** I mean, it's... it's young, but it's not like, you know, they didn't just graduate high school. [titters]

**Griffin:** Getting a PhD was never even close enough of a possibility in my life map that I would ever even look up how long it takes to do it. I have no fuckin' idea. You could tell me anything, six years, ten years, twelve years, I do not know. And I'll—I would believe anything you say.

**Rachel:** I mean, it varies. It depends how long you write and it depends how much teaching you have to do. But a lot of people, it takes like five years.

**Griffin:** Crazy.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I know my friend Clint did, and anytime I talk to him about it I'd be like, "That sounds like a lot of school! That sounds like a ton of work, are

you kidding me?" But good for—good for you! I think, genuinely, that's cool. Doctor... crazy.

[group chuckle]

**Rachel:** Good for you.

**Griffin:** Good for you, doctor. [chuckles] Can I steal you away?

**Rachel:** Yes.

[theme music plays]

[ad break]

**Griffin:** It's time, babe! Dinosaurs...

**Rachel:** [coughs]

**Griffin:** Did I make you cough? What about dinosaurs made—I'm curious about the kind of like reflexive... reaction that you just had to dinosaurs. Because it made you cough and I don't—

**Rachel:** We haven't talked about dinosaurs, huh?

**Griffin:** We've talked about dinosaurs as like a child fascination, like it's cool when kids get into dinosaurs. Which I think we mostly did because we were going to that dinosaur park outside of Austin like every weekend during Covid—

**Rachel:** Yeah, during, yeah, the—mm-hm.

**Griffin:** Because it was like the only outside thing that our son could—was interested in doing. But this is an adult dinosaur segment.

[group chuckle]

**Griffin:** This is a dinosaur segment for grown-ups.



**Rachel:** So, children, turn off the podcast.

**Griffin:** You're not ready for the kind of discourse that we're gonna get... Were you—were you ever like a dinosaur kid? Because...

**Rachel:** When I was little.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** I mean, kind of in the same way I'm—I had toy dinosaurs. I knew a little bit about dinosaurs, like you know, in that I like knew kind of the difference between, you know, like carnivores and herbivores.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** Kind of like, you know, the kids in Jurassic Park, I feel like I knew as much as those kids did.

**Griffin:** No fuckin' way, man. That little boy in Jurassic Park knew *a lot* about dinosaurs.

**Rachel:** Okay, well, he—yeah, he—

**Griffin:** The little girl, maybe—

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** She was like less like, you know... like really dialed in, really focused about it.

**Rachel:** Because she was a girl.

**Griffin:** Well, she was, if memory serves, more athletic than her little brother. Anyway, I was a dinosaur kid from like 1993 to 1994, when Jurassic Park came out.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** As was like everyone else in the world, and then I very quickly dropped it—

**Rachel:** That's what the tombstone says in your front yard of your childhood home.

**Griffin:** Uh-huh. [chuckles]

**Rachel:** "Dinosaur kid, one year."

**Griffin:** It says, "Dinosaur kid, '93, '94," parentheses, "when Jurassic Park came out."

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** "And then not really anymore after that, because there was only one good Jurassic Park movie, but they still keep making 'em. What the fuck is up with that?" End parentheses. Objectively, historically, biologically, I think dinosaurs are fuckin' rad. And the fact that we know anything about dinosaurs at all is like pretty crazy. It's pretty crazy. Because—start here. When you talk about dinosaurs, the like numbers and measurements that you have to use to talk about dinosaurs is like beyond human comprehension. Like, you can say dinosaurs, but—what is it? Okay, so dinosaurs first popped up in the scene 240 million years ago.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** That's crazy! You can say that like, "Oh, yeah, it's—we measured their bones and the carbon in them, whatever. And this... yeah, they were around 240 million years ago."

**Rachel:** Yeah, no, I can't.

**Griffin:** That's cool! Most, I mean, longest stretch, you know, a human can get is like 100, 110. I think there was like a 120-year-old, that's crazy. So, 240 million years ago is just an incomprehensible number. You can't even

imagine what that much time is. Homosapiens showed up between 200,000 and 300,000 years ago.

**Rachel:** I know.

**Griffin:** So like, and that was way after the—all the terrestrial dinosaurs got blown up by the asteroid, which was 66 million years ago. Still, a crazy, crazy long number. The fact that humans found old dinosaur bones, and was like, "I'll put this together like a puzzle. I don't know how, but let's just see what looks right." And then they did it, and they're like, "That looks super right. I'm gonna see if other people agree with me."

And they're like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's right, that's right." And they ewre like, "Hell yeah, that's a—that's a new—we got a new dinosaur, guys!" Like that whole process is... is really fantastic. Really great human accomplishment, human achievement shit. I think that's great. Sometimes I get TikToks in my feed of people like cracking open some like shale, some oceanside shale, and finding like a preserved ammonite fossil. And they get like so stoked.

And it's like, I get it, because you're holding a like 100-million-year-old shellfish corpse in your hand. That's insane. And being able to kind of like connect with that ancient sort of power is so tangible and so cool, and I find like so fascinating. As wild as it is like, how long ago dinosaurs lived, it's also wilder like how long they ran shit. Because they showed up 240 million years ago, or so, and then they were around for the whole Mesozoic era. I could never keep these straight.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Like I definitely learned about them in middle school or whatever.

**Rachel:** This is the thing. Isn't it while that you like, you learn about this stuff as a kid—

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And then that's it.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** That's all you get.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And there are updates to science, and like paleontologists will learn things, and all of a sudden, all the dinosaurs definitely have feathers.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** But nobody tells you that, because you stopped learning about dinosaurs thirty years ago.

**Griffin:** Yeah, you have to get like a Google News alert that's like, "Update—"

**Rachel:** "They got feathers now."

**Griffin:** [chuckles] "They got feathers now. We got a great picture of 'em now." And it's like, "Whoa, shit. How? Crazy. Cool. I love that we're figuring this stuff out."

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Yeah, I mean, there's basically like five extinction events throughout like pre-history, that sort of roughly divide up these eras. And so the Mesozoic era was the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous periods. And dinosaurs were around for that whole thing, like 140 million years, dinosaurs were the dominant terrestrial vertebrates. That's a really long span of time to be kind of like... king shit of fuck mountain, sort of.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** And being like in charge of Earth. And... that, the... I'm imagining that their sort of like long reign is why we've identified so many different

types of these guys. And this is where you start to like scratch that like, the deep Pokémon centers in my—in my brain.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** There's two sort of broad categories of dinosaurs, which are avian and non-avian dinosaurs. And then the mnemonic device you can use is that avian dinosaurs is birds, and non-avian dinosaurs is all the non-birds. And they're the ones who got got by the asteroid, specifically the one at the end of, I guess, the Cretaceous Period, sixty-six million years ago. And all the bird ones were like, "We're up, so like, it's chill."

**Rachel:** Yeah, right?

**Griffin:** And they got to go on and become, you know, our modern-day bird friends. And I think that's really great.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Hey, did you know that—I probably knew this at some point and forgot, and then was like bewildered by all the same today. Do you know birds are technically reptiles? It makes sense, right? Because you say they evolve from dinosaurs, and so if you can go back through their, you know, history or—their family history or whatever, like it makes sense. Because if they used to be dinosaurs, they gotta have a little bit of reptile. But they could—if you classify them as reptile, you're not wrong. Isn't that kind of fucked up?

**Rachel:** Huh...

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Are they cold-blooded? I guess so.

**Griffin:** Some of 'em are.

**Rachel:** Huh...

**Griffin:** Some won't call you back.

[pause]

**Griffin:** [chuckles] We have identified, according to the Museum of Natural History—I keep saying "we" like I had fuckin' anything to do about it.

**Rachel:** Way to go, Griffin. [titters]

**Griffin:** I look at this as like a human achievement. We've identified—

**Rachel:** And you're a human?

**Griffin:** And I'm a human. Museum of Natural History says we've identified seven—over 700 valid species of dinosaurs. Which is why, you know, you'll be watching a thing about dinosaurs, and they'll bring up some dinosaur that you've never heard of before. Yeah, they've got over 700 of those. And we all know the hits, right? The T-Rex, the... I can't think of a second dinosaur, but—

**Rachel:** Stegosaurus.

**Griffin:** Stegosaurus, thank you so much.

**Rachel:** Triceratops.

**Griffin:** Brontosaurus, the—my mind went to Brontosaurus, and then I remembered like, is Brontosaurus one? Because there's some weird shit about is it Brachiosaurus now. I feel like we phased one of those out.

**Rachel:** Jeez, I know...

**Griffin:** This is what I'm saying, the—this is my one thing about dinosaurs, is that the dinosaur scientists, also known as paleontologists—

**Rachel:** [chuckles] Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** I feel like they are kind of always kind of switching it up on me a little bit. And that's fine, they're—you're putting together a... 200-million-year-old bone puzzle. Like, I get that you're gonna sort of like... change stuff. Like, it's a fluid situation.

**Rachel:** Yeah, you know, now that you mention it, I don't know that big son has really learned about dinosaurs in school.

**Griffin:** No, absolutely not.

**Rachel:** I feel like they just kind of stopped teaching about it because they were like, "Hey, you know what? This is—this is changing a lot. We don't know."

**Griffin:** "We don't know." No, paleontologists are just mixing it up all the time—no, I mean, they're doing good work.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** The fact that there's like over 700 different types of just these like non-avian terrestrial dinosaurs, who all went extinct because they got blown up by a big asteroid, it means like, that's why you can have one that is like—weighs a million pounds and has a mile long neck. And then this one's got a huge jaw and a fin on its back, because it can eat anything, no matter where it is, land, sea or sky. Some are real little. Some of 'em had armor. Like, it's just kind of... it's wild that these are all basically in the same broad category of animal.

**Rachel:** I know.

**Griffin:** And yet like, they are so, so biologically different.

**Rachel:** I know.

**Griffin:** In a way that is genuinely kind of Pokémon-esque, if you—if you really want to get down into it.

**Rachel:** Yeah? Okay, yeah.

**Griffin:** Where it does get confusing is when, you know, depictions of them in TV and film confuses you. Like the Dilophosaurus can't actually like shoot out its neck frills and spit venom all over Wayne Knight's face.

**Rachel:** Oh, no?

**Griffin:** No, he couldn't do that. That was a... that was an invention of Mr. Michael Crichton. So, thanks, Mike, it's—we're all struggling out here, trying to keep our—

**Rachel:** They call them spitters?

**Griffin:** Not—nope. [titters] Who does? Who calls him that?

**Rachel:** [titters] In the—in the—

**Griffin:** In the movie.

**Rachel:** Movie.

**Griffin:** In the movie.

**Rachel:** [titters]

**Griffin:** I don't know, man. I think if you were an alien who came to Earth today, and you like lived here for a while and you're like, "Yeah, I get it. Like I kind of—I get what you guys are up to." And then you find out about dinosaurs?

**Rachel:** I know.

**Griffin:** Like, I think it would really kind of... kind of fuck you up a little bit. Like, we've all gotten really used to the fact that just an unfathomable amount of time ago, this big, scaly, diverse crowd of reptilian monsters like ruled the Earth.

**Rachel:** Yeah.



**Griffin:** They were in charge for a long time. And the only reason that we know about them is because of their bone puzzles.

**Rachel:** Well, and that's what's really hard to explain to kids, is like, oh, dragons aren't real.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Like, for sure dragons aren't real. Dinosaurs? Yes. Dinosaurs for—were real, yes.

**Griffin:** I almost feel like Jurassic Park did me a bit of a disservice. Because in my mind, even, you know, those years, '93, '94—great years. Great years for me, personally and professionally.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] Professionally.

**Griffin:** I was into dinosaurs, but it was very much from like a... I had dinosaur toys, and I thought they were cool. And you know, when Wayne Knight gets, you know, killed by the spitting dinosaur, it's like, wow, that's cool! Velociraptors with the big claw? "Clever girl." That's cool. But like, now that I'm a grown man and I can appreciate them on an adult level? I don't know, I think there is this like deep time appreciation of dinosaurs from the fact that they lived so long ago, in a way that when you think about it, like it makes your brain hurt and expand a little bit. In a way that now I think is like really, really, really, really cool and special. I think if I had appreciated dinosaurs on that level when I was a child, one, I would have been a pretty mature kid.

**Rachel:** Yeah, there's no way.

**Griffin:** Pretty dialed in. But two, like I could totally see myself going down like the paleontology track of the game of life. Because I think that's really, really neat! You get to dig around and figure out what these ancient, like, creatures look like. That's a cool job; that's a cool life.

**Rachel:** Yeah! It's gotta be a hard road, though, because, as we mentioned, you stop learning about it for a long time.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** So like, you would go most of your school career like specifically not taking any classes that discuss dinosaurs at all.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Like, I don't even know if in college there are that many courses that you could even take that would discuss dinosaurs. You would just have to keep plugging away, waiting for the day where you could really focus in on those guys.

**Griffin:** Yeah. That is true of nearly every collegiate major, I feel like, though.

**Rachel:** Well, if you're into like biology? You know... Like, there's a lot of like stuff where you're always taking it, you know?

**Griffin:** That's, yeah, that's a fair point.

**Rachel:** Math? You're a math guy? You've always gotta take math?

**Griffin:** I guess I was thinking like, when I was a—when I was like studying broadcast journalism—I had broadcast journalism classes, and then I had a lot of classes that did not have broadcast journalism in them.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] Well, true.

**Griffin:** And it's like, fuck, why am I—why am I even here right now, dude?

**Rachel:** True, but you didn't go a whole year without taking a class where you didn't have to write a paper, you know?

**Griffin:** No, but I imagine if you go to school for paleontology, you probably go to like a special cool dinosaur school, probably somewhere out in New

Mexico. And they do give you lots of dinosaur classes there. I don't think you and I—

**Rachel:** Hm, let's hope.

**Griffin:** You and I are so far away from the scene that I don't think—

**Rachel:** Let's hope.

**Griffin:** You know like... you know, what that life is, what that life is like. Hey, do you want to know what our friends at home are talking about?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** How about this one from Jacob, who says, "My Small Wonder recently has been reusing pill bottles to store coins. We use them at work to keep all the loose coins together for transport, and nothing's more satisfying to me at the end of a shift than counting down my drawer and putting all the change into their neat—little, neat compartments. Bonus points go to quarters, because their diameter matches up with that—with that of the pill bottle, and it always ends up with a perfect stack. Bonus points... points—bonus-bonus points go to fond memories of going to the arcade as a kid, and my mom would give each one of us kids an empty pill bottle to put our tokens in."

**Rachel:** That's nice.

**Griffin:** That's a—that's like a three in one, Jacob. That's very generous of you.

**Rachel:** I had to throw away an empty pill bottle the other day, and it just felt like there's got to be some way I can use this thing.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Coins, I guess.

**Rachel:** I guess coins?

**Griffin:** Yeah. I mean, when it's one of those like clear orange ones, your traditional, bog-standard prescription pill bottle, that's cool. Like, puts—I'll put something in there. But then—

**Rachel:** What? What?

**Griffin:** Um... sand.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Okay?

**Griffin:** From all the beaches.

**Rachel:** Treasures you find on the street.

**Griffin:** Treasures and—treasures and sand and—

**Rachel:** We should just give them directly to our kids. They can't open 'em, but—

**Griffin:** No. So, it'd be fun! Like a fun game.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Harriet says, "My Small Wonder today is the smell of bagged ice. It's such a distinctive smell, and always reminds me of summer road trips and camping. I also love the convenience of it. Out of ice in the freezer? Just a quick run to the gas station, and two dollars later, and I have an ice-cold water to hydrate with."

**Rachel:** *Huh.*

**Griffin:** Huh... I guess I've never thought about bagged ice having a smell?

**Rachel:** Yeah, I don't know that I bought enough bagged ice in my day.

**Griffin:** This is one where, when I read it, it was almost like a mystery, because I was like—

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** I believe you, Harriet. And I know it's one of those things where now, next time I get a bag of ice, you know I'm gonna take a deep huff, because—

**Rachel:** Yeah. I can almost picture it, but I think—

**Griffin:** I think you're right.

**Rachel:** But what I'm thinking of is like the smell of a freezer.

**Griffin:** guess that's true.

**Rachel:** I don't know if that's the same thing.

**Griffin:** It might not be. Harriet, we will investigate this further.

**Rachel:** We'll go smell some ice. [titters]

**Griffin:** We'll smell some ice bags, and we'll get back to you. Thank you so much for listening to our show. We hope you had a good time, because we always do when making it. Thank you so much to Bo En and Augustus for the use of our theme song, Money Won't Pay. You can find a link to that in the episode description. And thank you to Maximum Fun for having us on the network.

Go check out [maximumfun.org](http://maximumfun.org), all the shows that they've got over there. I got one to recommend that I've been listening to quite a bit lately, is Triple Click. It's a video game podcast over at Maximum Fun, and the hosts are all really great. And when a new game comes out that I've been playing, you know, I do my own video game podcast at The Besties, but I also like hearing them talk about it. Which is—which is rare for me.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** [Maximumfun.org](http://Maximumfun.org), lots of good stuff there. We got some merch over at [mcelroymerch.com](http://mcelroymerch.com). There is... there's so much great stuff over there. Oh,

there's a new TAZ Hunger beanie, a cool black beanie with like a Hunger design from the first season, TAZ: Balance. Get it ready for those colder months, because they're coming.

And ten percent of all merch proceeds this month will be donated to Border Angels, whose services include educational programs, water drops in the desert, day laborer outreach, Familias Reunidas immigration bond fund program, and shelter aid support in Tijuana to aid migrants and asylum seekers in need. All of that merch over at [mcelroymerch.com](http://mcelroymerch.com). And we have our last few shows for MBMBaM and TAZ this year in Salt Lake City and San Diego next month. Our—we've just announced, actually, our TAZ show.

**Rachel:** Speaking of Balance.

**Griffin:** Yeah! It's going to be a TAZ: Balance show. It is our fiftieth live Adventure Zone show, which is absolutely wild. So, we're going to be doing a special Balance episode, and we're going to be joined by special guest Erica Ishii, star of that that new Ghost of Yōtei game that I've been playing a bit of.

**Rachel:** Stellar dropout performer.

**Griffin:** Stellar dropout performer.

**Rachel:** Yeah, I saw the big Instagram post today, and people were losing their minds.

**Griffin:** Good. I can't—I can't wait for that. It's going to be a really fun one. Tickets for those shows are on sale now over at [bit.ly/mcelroytours](http://bit.ly/mcelroytours). That's it. Thanks for listening. We'll be back next week with another episode, so, keep it real. [Wonderfulpodcast@gmail.com](mailto:Wonderfulpodcast@gmail.com), if you want to send in your own Small Wonders. We don't get that out there—are you okay? You have like... are you okay? I've never seen—

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** You were like a robot deactivating?

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Like Rachel just lowered her head in prayer!

**Rachel:** I'm powering down.

**Griffin:** Okay, well, thanks for watching. Watching? Thanks for listening, everybody.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** And now we're... [spoofs the sound of a robot powering down].  
*Ding... bing-boom.* "Thank you."

[group chuckle]

**Griffin:** "Please charge your podcast."

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

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