

Wonderful 404: General Use Aural Application Emotional Steroids

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

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hi, this is Griffin McElroy!

Rachel: And this is Wonderful!

Griffin: Welcome to Wonderful! It's a podcast where we talk about things that we like, that we are into. A sort of general purpose, general use, oral application, sort of emotional steroid.

Rachel: Yeah. [chuckles]

Griffin: Wouldn't you say? Wouldn't you agree? Wouldn't you say all that stuff?

Rachel: Oral application, I mean, people listen to it?

Griffin: Aural. Aural application.

Rachel: Oh?

Griffin: Yeah. So like through the—through the ears—

Rachel: Thank you.

Griffin: And the—

Rachel: People we—like, I guess you would say that, and not like audit, auditory?

Griffin: No one knows, because no one's ever said a thing like that before. It doesn't make any sense.

Rachel: True. True.

Griffin: It doesn't mean anything. Your eyes really are just darting around my office.

Rachel: There's so much stuff in here now. [chuckles]

Griffin: Yes, since I've sort of remodeled, I've got a big new shelf, like a 70-inch fucking guy back there, that I am trying to put stuff on. My Small Wonder, I'm gonna go ahead and hop in here and say—

Rachel: Go ahead. [titters]

Griffin: I have just started going through a box that was labeled "study," which is great, from our move.

Rachel: From our move.

Griffin: Fuckin' four years ago.

Rachel: To be fair, Griffin put it in a closet, in a room he never goes into.

Griffin: True.

Rachel: And occasionally, I would be like, "Hey, there's still that box in the closet." But he didn't really have any space to put anything, so it just kind of stayed in there.

Griffin: Yes. Here's the fact of the matter, though, I guarantee you the contents of that box were in another box labeled like "for move to Austin," from when I lived in Chicago in 2011—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: And has not been opened—it's been probably over a decade since I've looked at the contents of this box. And it's been a wild journey digging through this thing!

Rachel: The way you have it set up right now, and the way that you're facing me, it looks like little senior in high school Griffin is peeking over your shoulder right now. [chuckles]

Griffin: Yes. So, I have this, what would you call that, portfolio? Like a fold out sort of display thing.

Rachel: Yeah, yeah.

Griffin: With a, I believe it's supposed to be eight senior pictures. A couple are missing. Maybe they were too risqué.

Rachel: Or your pictures were such a hot commodity that you had to pull from the original display.

Griffin: Maybe that's it.

Rachel: Because you know—

Griffin: That's how it worked.

Rachel: One of your teen lovers was like, "Well, I want Griffin in the sweater."

Griffin: I don't know that I love you saying "one of your teen lovers."

Rachel: When you were also a teen. [chuckles]

Griffin: Thank you. Please make sure you put that—yeah, I'm gonna tell you that that little fold out, that center fold of high school me, is not going to stay back there.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: I just thought you would find it funny if I had it.

Rachel: It is. Because right now, what I'm seeing over your right shoulder is little Griffin.

Griffin: [chuckles] What a fucking dork.

Rachel: He's perched.

Griffin: Oh my god! He's perched, he's ready!

Rachel: Are you sitting backwards on that chair?

Griffin: I am sitting backwards on that chair. Good eye, my love.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It's been great. There's letters from you that I've kept in there.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: I found a star gram, which was like a thing that—

Rachel: Oh, yeah!

Griffin: We started doing when we were in, you know, children's theater, community theater, where people could like pay a buck to send a message backstage. I found one that my mom sent to me that got me very verklempt. So, I don't know, man, it's been a while since I have really looked through my keepsakes. And it's—

Rachel: I'm happy that you dug in there today.

Griffin: Yeah, me too. Found my diploma, and I was like, maybe I'll display it like I'm a doctor or something. And then I found my high school diploma, and I was like, that doesn't seem worth it. And then I found my middle school diploma.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: And I was like, why do I have one of those?

Rachel: That seems like, hey, if you don't make it through the high school, at least you've got this middle school diploma. [chuckles]

Griffin: Also found my fuckin' birth certificate. What's up?

Rachel: Whoa?

Griffin: Yeah, dude!

Rachel: How did you get your passport if you didn't have it? Or did you buy a new one? Maybe you bought a new one.

Griffin: I probably bought a new one, yeah. Anyway, you got Small Wondie?

Rachel: We went on a journey yesterday.

Griffin: Yes, we did!

Rachel: To Rockville, Maryland, which I guess is Little Japan, Maryland. [chuckles] And that there were a number of like really cool like, I don't know, Japanese-themed stores and establishments.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And some of this is like a national chain. What is the name of the—

Griffin: Yeah, so Teso Life.

Rachel: Teso Life, yeah. So, there's a couple locations around here, and we'd never been to one before. And it is enormous!

Griffin: It's a gigantic sort of supermarket of Japanese goods, snacks, products, toys.

Rachel: It's like bigger than a Trader Joe's big.

Griffin: It's huge.

Rachel: Like aisles with actual things hanging from the ceiling telling you what's in that isle.

Griffin: Adjacent to a revolving sushi restaurant.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Adjacent to a fairly like, I don't know, traditional Japanese arcade, with lots of little claw machines and capsule toy sort of walls. And that place is called Meow Claw, and it was pretty dope.

Rachel: Small Son got really confused when we were getting ready to leave, because I think he thought we were actually going to Japan.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: Because he kept asking if we were going to take a car or a plane.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And he was really, really excited, in a way that seemed maybe a little outsized. But yeah, they had a great time.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: It was—

Griffin: So did I. Amazing.

Rachel: Uh-huh. It was delightful. And you know, and it was like... I don't understand exactly why we can't have all the varietals of these large brands.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like they had all the different kinds of Lay's potato chips, all the different kinds of Oreos, all the different kinds of Kit Kats. I don't understand why we don't get those here?

Griffin: We're not good enough.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: We haven't—we don't deserve it. Do we deserve it? I don't think so.

Rachel: It seems like people will go crazy for that!

Griffin: The chocolate orange Kit Kat is a—

Rachel: Oh my god.

Griffin: Stunner, guys. It's so good. It's the best chocolate orange thing ever.

Rachel: You know what it is?

Griffin: What is it?

Rachel: I think, so, a lot of these flavored items taste like the actual thing. They don't taste like the popsicle version of it.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: The taste like the, we took the zest of an orange. And maybe the US can't—

Griffin: Can't handle the zest.

Rachel: Can't keep up with that level of quality control. And doesn't want to. [titters]

Griffin: I just crushed a C.C. Lemon with my lunch.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I had a little chicken Caesar wrap with a C.C. Lemon chaser. God dang, I'm feeling great. My body is coursing with vitamin C energy right now.

Rachel: I'm happy for you, honey.

Griffin: Can you tell?

Rachel: You definitely, you seem energized and—

Griffin: I have been energized by loving nostalgia from my box, my special box, and also from the 5000% intake of vitamin C from the C.C. Lemon that I just drank.

Rachel: Can we... we've probably talked about this on the show before, but—

Griffin: What?

Rachel: But anytime that Griffin has a box of memory items—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: He calls it keepsakes. And I find that to be the most adorable and charming thing.

Griffin: Why? I don't know that we've talked about this. Why is that—is that not what people call them?

Rachel: I felt like it was a word used by Hallmark that people didn't actually use in real life.

Griffin: Okay, interesting.

Rachel: Like, "Here is a box for your keepsakes." And I thought, no one says that word.

Griffin: Yeah, I don't know. I don't know what else to call 'em.

Rachel: And then I met you, and I—it's like, it's so delightful.

Griffin: I also want to give a shout out to The Boyfriend season two. It's back on Netflix.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: The vibes are so fucking choice, guys. As soon as that theme song hits, that [sings] "pa-pa, pa-pa, pa-pa-pum-pa." Oh, boy, I was back in the saddle, ready to—ready to ride!

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Fucking great program.

Rachel: It's like—it's like a wintery scene this time.

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: Which hits real right like in January.

Griffin: Mm-hm.

Rachel: The panel is back.

Griffin: If you don't remember, it is a—it is, I don't know... I don't know if it has the same production company as Terrace House. I feel like we looked this up one—at one point.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It has the same kind of like tone, except it is a house full of young gay men, I think like seven or eight dudes. And they live together for two months, and they run a coffee shop.

Rachel: Yeah, this gives it like Real World vibes. Like real early Real World vibes, when they started making them work a job together.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But they use that as a way to kind of couple off, so people will like choose the person they want to work at the coffee shop with them.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Which is a real mixed bag. [chuckles]

Griffin: It sure is!

Rachel: Because it's like, "I want to spend time with you in this tiny, enclosed trailer where we make coffee. And also, you have to work now, and I'm sorry." [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah, this is your job. And you do not get paid, I do not think. I do not think you get paid.

Rachel: No, they make like—Griffin and I figured out they make like—

Griffin: \$40 or something for the whole house, yeah.

Rachel: Yeah, like less \$100 a day. [chuckles]

Griffin: I go first this week.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Man, we are talking about a lot of Japanese pop culture, because today, I am talking about Kyary Pamyu Pamyu, which I could swear I've talked about before, but I think maybe it's because I mentioned her in passing while we were—I did a segment on Capsule, which is a Japanese—

Rachel: Yeah! Okay.

Griffin: Sort of electronic pop band, that we got into when we went there for our honeymoon. And had a CD player in our Airbnb, and found a Capsule

CD. And we were like, oh, wait, this fucking slaps. So, the producer for Kyary Pamyu Pamyu is Yasutaka Nakata, who is also in Capsule. He also produces music for Perfume, which is like a monster, huge girl group over there.

Rachel: Huh. Okay.

Griffin: So, he's crazy—he's got like over a dozen best-selling albums under his belt. But anyway, Kyary Pamyu Pamyu is a Japanese pop star. She's a model. She's an artist. She's been on the scene since 2011, when she released her debut single, which was titled "Pon Pon Pon," which just went crazy worldwide, because the music video is the strangest thing—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I've ever seen and anyone else has ever seen. Before we discuss that, here's a little bit of the song, "Pon Pon Pon," just to give folks who are unfamiliar with Kyary Pamyu Pamyu just a sample of her style.

["Pon Pon Pon" by Kyary Pamyu Pamyu plays]

Griffin: If that song sounds familiar, it is probably because you watched the music video back in 2011, because someone shared it with you. Because it's just an absolutely psychedelic kind of Harajuku panic attack that unfolds in real time. It features Kyary Pamyu Pamyu in a very colorful, almost sort of like parade leader striped outfit, in a big, colorful playhouse where there's like a big, faceless ballerina dancing around. And also, there's like skulls and ducks and loaves of bread.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: All 3D, just kind of flying around. It's like, it is absolute sensory overload, this music video. And that is why—it was her debut single, and this music video just absolutely gave her this meteoric rise, because people could not stop talking about it.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And for obvious reason. If you have not seen it, you should go watch it. Before this song, she was just, she was a blogger and—she was a fashion blogger and a model. And then she met up with Nakata and recorded "Pon Pon Pon," and then the rest was history. Her style is very like... the term "kawaii," which translates to "cute" in Japanese.

It's like that, but also kind of like absurdist. Everything is like *way* oversized and sort of clashing and fuzzy and wild. She's been featured on fashion magazines sort of across the globe for her style. She's also done a bunch of cross-promotional collaborations with companies like Studio Ghibli, Coca-Cola.

Nintendo she did a big sort of collaboration with where she designed a bunch of like 3DS sort of cover plates that were like loosely modeled on outfits that she had worn in the past. She also in 2016, the Seibu Ikebukuro railway line featured a train that was modeled after Kyary Pamyu Pamyu's sort of aesthetic. Which I have to imagine must be—

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Must be fun to ride on. She has cited Gwen Stefani, Katy Perry and Lady Gaga as influences, both sort of musically and aesthetically. I think the Katy Perry comparison is the most—the most apt. The same way that like Katy Perry takes the like California Girls kind of like aesthetic, but then blows it up to this like... like outrageous, cartoonish proportion. Where, I mean, you think about her Super Bowl halftime show with like the big sharks dancing around behind her, like—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: There is a kind of like winky nod, like an understanding of like, "I am taking this idea and I'm taking this style, and I'm taking it to the like most maximalist possible level."

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Kyary Pamyu Pamyu does that with this, you know, Harajuku vibe. Harajuku is a neighborhood—people know from like when Gwen Stefani had her whole deal, right?

Rachel: Yeah, I think so.

Griffin: I assume.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I don't know how much primer people need on some of these concepts. But she takes that style, she takes that vibe, and just like owns it with so much like pride and just like takes it to just such an extreme degree. And what I find really interesting about Kyary Pamyu Pamyu is I feel like that aesthetic, that sort of like hyper-cute, exaggerated aesthetic had a pretty like, I don't know, like a stereotypical kind of stigma here in the States. You know, up until not too long ago.

Rachel: Well, yeah, I mean like, at first glance, it feels kind of juvenile. You know?

Griffin: There's that, yeah, absolutely.

Rachel: It's kind of like a little girl's bedroom.

Griffin: Yes, absolutely, it is.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: 10 seconds into the music video, it's clear that something completely different is going on. But I feel like especially when, you know, the internet became a thing that everyone was on, and it became easier to see stuff that was coming out of other countries, there was like a very quick knee jerk reaction to a lot of Japanese pop culture of like, "Oh, look how—look how weird this thing is."

"Look how weird this show is." But I feel like Kyary Pamyu Pamyu and specifically, you know, "Pon Pon Pon" the music video like comes out just

fuckin' swinging for the fences with that exact kind of like vibe and owning it and celebrating it, and seemingly just like having the most fun with it. And I think that that is super rad.

Her latest album dropped in 2021, it's called Candy Racer. It's got jams for days, including a track that Gus and I are huge fans of, which is called "Dodonpa," which is an onomatopoetic word roughly translating to "boom wave," which is, I guess, a Dragon Ball reference. It's also the name of a former roller coaster at Fuji-Q Highland, an amusement park in Japan.

Rachel: Oh.

Griffin: That the roller coaster, it was called Do-Dondonpa, I think. It closed in 2024 because it kept breaking people's bones.

Rachel: Jesus. [chuckles]

Griffin: So, "Dodonpa" the song, I will say, goes hard to match. Here's a little bit of "Dodonpa."

["Dodonpa" by Kyary Pamyu Pamyu plays]

Griffin: I think her style is just sort of unimpeachably very cool, and her music bops, sort of aided by Yasutaka Nakata's like capacity to produce extremely catchy electronic jams. Also, fun fact, in 2023, she privately married Shôno Hayama, who was the sweet boy prince commentator on Terrace House.

Rachel: Whoa!

Griffin: And they had—they had their first kid in 2024.

Rachel: He's not old enough to be married. [chuckles]

Griffin: He is old enough to be married, and he's married to Kyary Pamyu!

Rachel: That's fantastic.

Griffin: Yeah, it's a wild sort of small world moment. Anyway, that's Kyary Pamyu Pamyu. She's got a lot of music and a lot of art and stuff out there in the world. And I think that's pretty great. Can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yes.

[theme music plays]

[ad read]

[break]

John: Sleep is important, but it's difficult sometimes. I'm John Moe. On Sleeping With Celebrities, famous people help conk you out by talking in soothing voices about unimportant things. Maria Bamford on parking.

Maria: I parked in a bus stop. That's just not right. I am not a bus.

John: Roxane Gay on airports.

Roxane: My favorite airport is Indianapolis. It has a really smart layout.

John: Alan Tudyk on yardsticks.

Alan: You hand somebody a yardstick, yardsticks become part of the family.

John: Granted, it's a weird idea, but it's lots of fun and it works. Listen wherever you get podcasts.

[break]

Manolo: Hey, it's Sue, the subway train.

[piano notes play]

Manolo: Hey, guess what, Sue? I just inherited a game show. And I have to continue it, because there are people out there who like to curl up into a ball and listen to it.

[piano notes play]

Manolo: Yeah, it's a podcast where listeners submit game show ideas for others to play on air.

[piano notes play]

Manolo: Well, it is. In fact, the dumber the better.

[piano notes play]

Manolo: Right, right, it's called Dr. Gameshow. Some curled up balls consider it a tradition, while others call it a train wreck.

[piano notes play]

Manolo: No, not you Sue, it's Dr. Gameshow. If you're the sort that likes to listen to people competing for refrigerator magnets, then curl up into a ball and listen to Dr. Gameshow, every other Wednesday on maximumfun.org.

[piano notes play]

[break]

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: My topic this week—

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: Is the kaleidoscope.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I never am not excited to see a kaleidoscope.

Rachel: I know!

Griffin: There was a brief period after I saw Oklahoma, where he tries to, I guess, Curly tries to kill—or no, the bad guy tries to kill Curly with a kaleidoscope and he's like, "Look, there's like a naked lady in here." But it's actually like got a knife in it, and the knife is supposed to kill you.

Rachel: Oh, wow, I forgot about that plot point.

Griffin: Yeah! It's like pretty horrific for Oklahoma.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: So, there was a brief period where it's like, I'm not trying to let Curly fucking—I think Curly was the good guy? Anyway.

Rachel: I don't know.

Griffin: Love a kaleidoscope.

Rachel: Yeah! My—so, my grandma, much like my father, big collector of things. My grandma loved antiques, and then kind of inexplicably, off to the side, she had a small Kaleidoscope collection. [chuckles]

Griffin: I didn't know she had many kaleidoscopes?

Rachel: Yeah. I mean—

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: My parents have one at their house, and then we have one here.

Griffin: Gang, this Kaleidoscope is a *beauty*. Wood carved.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Pepper grinder-ass kaleidoscope.

Rachel: Yeah. There had to have been more than that. But yeah, it's just one of those things that's so... I mean, you never know what you're gonna get—

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Rachel: When you look in there.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Rachel: And you hold it up to the sun, and it's a real treat.

Griffin: Don't do that.

Rachel: Well, I mean, get some good sunlight through it.

Griffin: Sometimes you can. If it's a—if it's occluded enough, absolutely, go ahead and look at the sun. But if it's just, you know... just be safe, be smart.

Rachel: But I didn't really know anything about these things.

Griffin: Yeah, I guess I didn't either!

Rachel: Yeah. So I looked it up... It's pretty cool.

Griffin: Yeah, I would hope so. I would hope if you looked it up and it wasn't cool, you would be like, "And then, so I picked a different—I did pick—"

Rachel: Thanks for listening to Wonderful. [chuckles]

Griffin: No, but I want to hear about how it works, because I don't know.

Rachel: Okay, so, kaleidoscopes, invented in 1816 by Scottish scientist Sir David Brewster.

Griffin: Fuck yeah!

Rachel: Who was a mathematician and physicist, who contributed a lot of different things to the field of optics.

Griffin: Chiefly among them, the kaleidoscope. I love something so whimsical coming out of a physicist and mathematician.

Rachel: So, his big thing is something called Brewster's angle, which is—this may be more meaningful to people in the sciences. But it is... it is the way of figuring out the frequency at which light becomes polarized? It's an angle at which light must strike a substance for maximum polarization. And it is central to the development of fiber optics, lasers and to the study of meteorology, cosmology.

Griffin: Damn!

Rachel: Et cetera.

Griffin: Okay. Is that how—is that how he earned his Brewster's millions? Is with that disc—is with that discovery?

Rachel: I don't know what that's a reference to.

Griffin: It's a movie...

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: It's a movie called Brewster's Millions...

Rachel: Do you know anything about the movie?

Griffin: Not really.

Rachel: This is—this is a unique McElroy trait. [chuckles] You're able to pull very specific references and then have nothing—

Griffin: I can—I know the face of the guy who's in it, and I can't remember his fuckin' name and it's absolutely killing me.

Rachel: You want me to look it up?

Griffin: I do kind of want you to look it up.

Rachel: Brewster's...

Griffin: Wait, I almost had it. Oh, shit, it was right there! What's his name?!

Rachel: Oh, wow.

Griffin: Gregory...

Rachel: No.

Griffin: Shit. Who?

Rachel: 1985, starring Richard Pryor—

Griffin: Richard Pryor!

Rachel: And John Candy.

Griffin: And John Candy!

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That's probably why it was on my mind, because we just watched the John Candy doc.

Rachel: Ooh, 39% on Rotten Tomatoes.

Griffin: Yeah, no, probably not a great flick. That was in his... that was in John Candy's sort of stinker oeuvre.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Anyway, kaleidoscope!

Rachel: Anyway, kaleidoscope. So, kaleidoscope, Brewster named his invention after the Greek words "kalos," which means beautiful, "eidos," which means form, and "scopos," which means watcher. So, kaleidoscope roughly translates to beautiful form watcher.

Griffin: Well then I'm a kaleidoscope—

Rachel: I was gonna make that joke!

Griffin: I'm sorry, babe. Man, we're like Henry and Gus right now.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Those boys jump on a deez nuts joke like fuckin' rabid coyotes on a bone that they've found in an alleyway. Just absolutely feral.

Rachel: It's gotten so that if one of them gets to it before, then the other one, usually, Henry, will have to set Gus up so that he gets the satisfaction. [titters]

Griffin: Yeah, absolutely, he's a good big brother.

Rachel: There's a lot of discussion of Waddle Dee in this house, I'll say.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Okay, so Brewster's kaleidoscope was a tube containing loose pieces of colored glass and other objects, reflected by mirrors or glass lenses, set at angles that creates patterns.

Griffin: Okay, cool.

Rachel: You know, a kaleidoscope.

Griffin: Sure. There's one—there's—I feel like I never really understood how it worked until we went to the museum of illusions, where they have like a giant tube full of mirrors that you can look in, and have someone look in the other side, and it shows you them sort of reflected—

Rachel: Yeah, uh-huh.

Griffin: In those ways. And it felt like, oh, this is what being inside a kaleidoscope must—

Rachel: Yeah, exactly, 100%. So, the kaleidoscope creates reflections of objects through the use of angled mirrors set at the end. As the user rotates the tube, the mirrors create new patterns. The images will be symmetrical if the mirror angle is an even divider of 360 degrees.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: So, a mirror set at 60 degrees will generate a pattern of six regular sectors. A mirror at 45 degrees will make eight equal sectors, et cetera, et cetera. So, what ended up happening, Brewster filed his patent, and then almost immediately it was ripped off. Because the way he patented it was very specific to the materials used.

Griffin: Oh, no!

Rachel: So there's this article that talks about, you know, it was easy to identify that you could change the tube from brass to cardboard and find alternative materials for a cheaper version.

Griffin: Damn it.

Rachel: So he did not capitalize on what became a huge phenomenon, just across the country and then into the world. His manufacturer estimated that more than 200,000 units were sold in the first three months.

Griffin: That's crazy.

Rachel: Can you imagine, in that time period?

Griffin: In that—that's like half the world's population at that point.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: That's great. A lot of the times, whenever I hear about like toy zeitgeists from the 19th century, and it's—then it'll be like shit like, it's a hoop and a stick. It's like, what were we doing?

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Why was life so shitty and bad that the—but this one is like, yeah, I get it.

Rachel: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Griffin: Absolutely. To live in a world without kaleidoscopes, then all of a sudden there's kaleidoscopes? Yeah, I'm gonna go crazy on that. Thank you.

Rachel: The article I read compared it to 2017's fidget spinner, which I feel like is giving the fidget spinner a lot of credit. I mean, fidget spinner is fun.

Griffin: I do like a fidget spinner.

Rachel: But not quite as like a sensory experience, I would say, as a kaleidoscope.

Griffin: Agree to disagree. I love a fidget spinner.

Rachel: [chuckles] It was—so in the early 1870s, Charles Busch was a Prussian man living in Massachusetts, received additional patents in 1873 and 1874 related to improvements in kaleidoscopes.

Griffin: Great.

Rachel: And this is when you could start mass manufacturing parlor kaleidoscopes.

Griffin: Ooh!

Rachel: Which had the liquid-filled glass to create more—

Griffin: That was very cool.

Rachel: Yeah. Yeah.

Griffin: I like that a lot.

Rachel: Yeah, it was incredibly popular. There were numerous things written about it. And one of the things I read was a quote in Blackwood's Magazine, in 1818, that said, "In the memory of man, no invention and no work, whether addressed to the imagination or to the understanding, ever produced such an effect."

Griffin: Hell yeah!

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I mean, I get it! You didn't—guys didn't have a lot of stuff going on back then.

Rachel: I know, exactly.

Griffin: So, mirrors and colored glass, that's probably like, that would boggle, you know, my 19th century mind.

Rachel: There were people on the street that were like charging a penny for people to look through kaleidoscopes.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: [chuckles] People had them in their parlors. And then there were articles written about how children were walking into walls because they were so distracted by their kaleidoscopes.

Griffin: Yeah. Naturally.

Rachel: [chuckles] And then I had to look up biggest kaleidoscope, right? Because like—

Griffin: That's immediately where my mind went.

Rachel: It's in the Catskills, inside a resort called The Emerson. They have a 60-foot-tall silo, and inside they have a 37 and a half foot long, 5000-pound kaleidoscope.

Griffin: Yeah, that's cool.

Rachel: And they use—they actually use video, projected through a lens system.

Griffin: That's less cool, but the thing itself is pretty rad.

Rachel: But I mean, how would you find like giant beads and glass large enough if it's 37 feet long?

Griffin: I don't know, they already made the giant telescope, you know what I mean? Seems like they could make giant—

Rachel: You mean kaleidoscope.

Griffin: What did I say?

Rachel: You said telescope.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Anyway.

Griffin: Anyway.

Rachel: Yeah, that's the kaleidoscope.

Griffin: I love a kaleidoscope!

Rachel: Me too.

Griffin: It seems like the kind of thing that I would get into collecting.

Rachel: Yeah. Yeah. My grandma had one, that I think my parents have now, that has like little like flowers in it. You know, like little flower petals and stuff. Yeah, there's a lot of varieties out there. They're very pretty.

Griffin: Yeah. Your grandma also collected... PC first-person shooters from the sort of mid '90s.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And also, some of the smuttiest romance novels that I have ever seen in my entire life.

Rachel: [chuckles] Just walls and walls.

Griffin: Walls and walls and walls—

Rachel: Never addressed. Never addressed. We would talk much about our love for books and—at great length about famous authors throughout history. But meanwhile, her entire basement like was covered in just romance novels.

Griffin: Just wet torsos.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Hither and yawn. Hey, do you want to know what our friends at home are talking about?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Hannah says, "My Small Wonder is when you go to the bathroom at work in the morning and the toilet seat is still up, so you know you're the first person to use it since it was last cleaned. Every time I feel like I'm christening the toilet for the day."

Rachel: That is nice. You probably—I don't know that you've had this feeling in a while.

Griffin: No, I mean, when there's like—I guess when you go to like a hotel and they have the little folded toilet paper, that's always special.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: But no, I've never had this experience.

Rachel: It is a real thrill. There's something too about like swinging the stall door open too and just being delighted by the surprise.

Griffin: By this fresh toilet. Mallory says, "This weekend marked the 13th year my husband and I have gone to Narnes and Boble."

[both chuckle]

Griffin: Mallory, I didn't notice that you said that until this exact moment, even when I put this into my document, I didn't realize you said Narnes and Boble until my brain was reading it.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: "We've gone to Narnes and Boble to pick out books for each other to celebrate our first date there. This year, in honor of the Poetry Corner, we picked out books of poetry from two writers Rachel has talked about, Franny Choi and Richard Siken." Seekin?

Rachel: I think, oh, I think on the show, I may have mispronounced it, but it is Siken.

Griffin: Cool. Yeah, that was Mallory's email. I love that.

Rachel: That's darling.

Griffin: I love a Barnes and Noble anniversary date.

Rachel: Yeah. What a like—what a sweet way to do it, too.

Griffin: Yeah. Hey, thanks 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 so much to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. You can go to maximumfun.org and check out all the great stuff that they've got going on over there. Shows for any topic your mind could conceive of!

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: We've got merch over at the McElroy Merch Store for you to check out. And if you haven't subscribed to our YouTube channel, The McElroy Family on YouTube, you should do that. We're doing a bunch of streams every week. We're doing Clubhouse the last Tuesday of every month. So, I guess next Tuesday, when you are hearing this, we'll be bringing back Clubhouse. And then every other Tuesday, we're just gonna be playing video games for a thing we call the Super McElroy Brothers. You can follow the McElroy Entertainment System on Instagram and get up to date on all of our comings and goings on YouTube. But that is going to do it for us. Do you have anything else, my love?

Rachel: So, sorry, you moved your chair a little bit and now I can see some of the other senior pictures.

Griffin: Sorry, our—sorry—

Rachel: I know, the mustache. I don't know where the mustache came from.

Griffin: Yeah, our nanny just sent us pictures of our kids with a mustache—with mustaches. God, what a good day, man!

Rachel: [chuckles] One of the senior pictures, it looks like you've placed your head in between the 2000 and the five.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah, so it's like it's—looks like it's—and I'm wearing a suit that is ill-fitting, and I'm—it looks like my head is being crushed by two big granite sort of numbers, 20 and 05.

Rachel: You are making an expression to match, which I find darling.

Griffin: Yeah. Yeah. And that—

Rachel: Do you remember this like photoshoot?

Griffin: Yes, it took six and a half hours.

Rachel: [chuckles] No!

Griffin: And it really shattered my kind of like perception of myself. It was a sort of ego death.

Rachel: Did you get a lot of instruction?

Griffin: I got a lot of instruction. And they didn't let me do anything fun or cool.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: My friend Tanner gave me his fuckin' senior photo! My friend Tanner gave me his senior photo! And it's him with his long arms out—he's got these long arms. His long arms outstretched. It says "Tanner" underneath him. And in each hand, he's holding a flaming basketball! That shits real, folks! I didn't get to do anything fun.

Rachel: No, not at all. But you, I mean, you've got several different looks, I'm seeing. And approximately the same face in most of the photos.

Griffin: I pray to the good lord in heaven above that I find that senior photo of my friend Tanner in this box of keepsakes.

Rachel: I think he has it—you have shown it to me before, so he must have posted it on some kind of social media.

Griffin: It fuckin' rules.

Rachel: Unless I have created it in my mind's eye.

Griffin: That's possible.

Rachel: From your detailed description. But I feel like I have seen it before.
[chuckles]

Griffin: It rules. Anyway, bye, everybody!

Rachel: Bye.

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

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