

## Wonderful! 407: Curling Curious

Published February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026

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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:** *Ba-ba-bum, ba-ba-bum!* That's not it. What's the Olympics one?

**Rachel:** I don't know, I was trying to think of this earlier!

**Griffin:** [sings] *Pum-pa, pa-pum-pa-pa!*

**Rachel:** Yeah. Is that for us?

**Griffin:** Is that it? *Pa-pa-pa-pa-pa-pa, pa-pa-pa-pa-pa-pa!*

**Rachel:** Yeah, there it is.

**Griffin:** No, that's Chariots of Fire, isn't it?

**Rachel:** No, that's the Olympics one.

**Griffin:** Yeah, you're right. *Pa-pa-pa-pa-pa-pa, pa-pa-pa-pa-pa-pa!*

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Welcome to Wonderful! It's a podcast where we talk about things we like, that's good, that we're into.

**Rachel:** We're reporting live from the Olympic Games.

**Griffin:** We are in Italy.

**Rachel:** Milano.

**Griffin:** We're in Milano, Italy! And we are here talking to some of our favorite guys. Apolo Anton Ohno is here!

**Rachel:** [chuckles] Oh, yeah, let's go, let's go, let's do this.

**Griffin:** Tara Lipinski!

**Rachel:** Kristi Yamaguchi!

**Griffin:** Kristi Yamaguchi! Fuckin'...

**Rachel:** Did you say Tara Lipinski already?

**Griffin:** Yeah. They had Johnny Weir!

**Rachel:** Johnny Weir!

**Griffin:** The Hamm brothers! They were more of a Summer Olympics. Or was it Humm?

**Rachel:** I don't know who you're talking about.

**Griffin:** They're like the gymnastics guy—the gymnastics guys. And they're like brothers and they're like—

**Rachel:** Oh! That sounds right.

**Griffin:** Like sick on the pommel horse. They're here!

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Freakin' everyone has gathered—

**Rachel:** Lindsey Vonn? Is she—

**Griffin:** Lindsey Vonn, well, she—

**Rachel:** Did she get injured? Is she the one that got injured?

**Griffin:** She was—she was pretty terribly injured, yeah.

**Rachel:** Oh, okay.

**Griffin:** So that's... She's not—she's not here, she's recovering, but she's doing great.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** But we are here to talk about these big games. And we haven't watched hardly any of 'em.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] No! We've seen little highlights. The problem is, a lot of it airs during the day.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And the other problem is, our children don't let us decide what we watch on TV.

**Griffin:** Right!

**Rachel:** We did get some purchase with Gus.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** For a little bit.

**Griffin:** They were curious about curling. They sat patiently while curling happened around them.

**Rachel:** Figure skating he seemed to enjoy—

**Griffin:** Figure skating, of course.

**Rachel:** Which is great, because I also enjoy figure skating.

**Griffin:** Yeah. But anything beyond that—

**Rachel:** But most of the time, it's The Royalty Family. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Most of the time it is YouTube or—

**Rachel:** If The Royalty Family could be in the Olympics, we would have—

**Griffin:** Yeah, and I'm sure they probably have some sort of deal—

**Rachel:** Yeah, they're probably there right now.

**Griffin:** With them. I mean, we've watched Jordan Binnington, the St. Louis Blues goalie—

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** Who is in net for Team Canada.

**Rachel:** Having a terrible like season with the Blues.

**Griffin:** For us.

**Rachel:** But his—

**Griffin:** What's his save percent—it's like 8.75, like something really, really—

**Rachel:** It's like, it's literally one of the lowest in the NHL, and it's because our team, I guess, is not supporting him appropriately. Because he's doing great for Canada.

**Griffin:** He's doing amazing! And he seems—

**Rachel:** Just like he did last time.

**Griffin:** Yeah! He's shutting out the haters. They beat France 10-2.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Which is like, I don't know that I've ever seen that score on a hockey scoreboard before.

**Rachel:** Not lately. We watched the Miracle on Ice feature, and there were definitely—

**Griffin:** We did!

**Rachel:** There were definitely scores like that back then.

**Griffin:** Yes, largely by the Soviet Union.

**Rachel:** Yeah. [titters]

**Griffin:** Putting up pretty insane numbers. Except—

**Rachel:** Which is what it was called back then. We know that it's not anymore. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Yeah, guy—

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Sorry, did you feel like you needed to couch that with—

**Rachel:** I don't know! I felt like—[laughs]

**Griffin:** Did you think our listeners would be like, "*Actually!* The USSR disbanded in—"

**Rachel:** Yeah, no.

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

**Rachel:** I just thought I'd make it clear.

**Griffin:** Do you have a Small Wonder?

**Rachel:** I was gonna say something that has been true for a long time, but it just occurred to me today.

**Griffin:** Oh, wow.

**Rachel:** Which is we don't really use glasses to drink out of anymore.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** Which is, it feels very eco-conscious. I know when Griffin and I met, he was notorious for leaving half empty glasses around—

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** His living space. And we just have water bottles in our house all the time now. It's what the boys drink out of, it's what we drink out of.

**Griffin:** Reusable water bottles. It's important. We don't have—because like—

**Rachel:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** It's weird for you to say we don't use glasses because we're eco-conscious—

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Instead, we're just draining Aquafinas fuckin' left and right.

**Rachel:** Sorry, to me, that was like the USSR. I just kind of assumed people would know. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Yeah, no.

**Rachel:** But yeah, I think about that when I open our cabinet. Now, coffee mugs? Tons.

**Griffin:** Oh, dude.

**Rachel:** Tons of coffee mugs.

**Griffin:** I've got two on my desk right now.

**Rachel:** But water bottles, yeah, so we basically have like a bottom shelf in our cabinet full of glasses that we almost never use, unless I want to decant a beer.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** For just a special night. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Sure. Which, I don't know that we've decanted a beer in—we have a—we have some nice—

**Rachel:** I decanted a beer! Remember, we got that cider?

**Griffin:** That's not a beer. That's like a nice cider. What is that stuff called?

**Rachel:** Do you know, I considered cider a beer. It's got a Spanish name I feel like.

**Griffin:** Oncho?

**Rachel:** Yeah, I think that's right.

**Griffin:** It's good shit, man.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** So, Love Is Blind is back, and it's...

**Rachel:** We're not caught up.

**Griffin:** We're not—yeah, we're—we basically, we're like on the last episode of the chunk of episodes that's available now.

**Rachel:** I think there's an episode where they like go to "paradise" after they've coupled up, that we have not watched yet.

**Griffin:** We started it. Do you not remember? We started it last night. Because one of the couples, they were just like, "Sorry, we ran out of money and we can't send you to paradise, so you're—"

**Rachel:** We did start it, but we haven't seen any of the—oh, I guess we have seen a little bit. They have just arrived—

**Griffin:** It hasn't left much of an impression—

**Rachel:** [laughs] They have just arrived at the resort. We haven't seen them all meet up with each other.

**Griffin:** True.

**Rachel:** Or like do—

**Griffin:** That's always where—that's always such a crucible—

**Rachel:** Experience local culture! [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Oh my god. That doesn't happen as much on Love Is Blind I feel like—

**Rachel:** I know, it just pretty reminded me of when we used to play Bachelor bingo, or whatever.

**Griffin:** Yeah, some of the conversations that took place in these pods, first of all, compared to last year, way less like, "And I believe in traditional conservative values!"

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** "Isn't that cool?" Like a lot less like, "And I—you know, if my son told me he was gay, I would be like crazy!"

**Rachel:** Which is wild, because they're in Ohio.

**Griffin:** They are in Ohio.

**Rachel:** Which is one of the more notoriously conservative states. I mean, it's swing. It's definitely swing.

**Griffin:** They mix it up, they swing. They swing it.

**Rachel:** But yeah, anyway.

**Griffin:** But also like, some performances by the dudes in the pods that are truly unwatchable.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Truly, truly, truly, truly unwatchable.

**Rachel:** Yeah...

**Griffin:** There's a dude who talks about how, he's like giving a sad story to try to like open up. And he's a soccer player, and he talks about how on draft day, he was supposed to be a top five pick, but he had a knee surgery. And so he's like telling this story and you're like, oh my god. And then he didn't get drafted. And he's like, "But I was there watching with all my soccer teammates, and one of my friends got drafted, and they cheered. And then they were like, let's go play soccer, and then they left." And I was like, wow, this is a sad story. And then he was like, "And then I got drafted in like 20<sup>th</sup> place, but I was supposed to be top five." That's your thing, dude?!

**Rachel:** [chuckles] That reminds me of the guy who was like, "I know you said you wanted to go deep, so I'm gonna be vulnerable here and tell you about my great first kiss and the great first time I had sex." [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yeah, "I lost my virginity—" He said it was like *The Notebook*, and the woman on the other side was like, "Jesus Christ..."

**Rachel:** And was obsessed with the fact that she hadn't seen *The Notebook*, and then continued to talk about *The Notebook*. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** It's like, "Yeah, my girlfriends and I always watch *The Notebook* together. It's like the thing that I do with my girlfriends." [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Soccer dude also was like talking about, "I'm such a nerd."  
"What do you read?"  
"I read... stoicism. Letters from a stoic."

**Rachel:** That's the same soccer guy, yeah.

**Griffin:** It's the same soccer guy. But then he like misattributed it. He was—he said it was like, "Yeah, I'm really into letters from a stoic." But he like said the wrong dude, like who did not write those. It's a—it's some all-time boy performances.

**Rachel:** He, from what I can tell, has no redeeming qualities. Now, it may change, but it seems to be the case. Now, what do you think is wonderful exactly? Just that it's back? [chuckles]

**Griffin:** I don't know, man, like, some true, uncontrollable cackling I feel like it has sort of gotten out of us during a pretty trying time.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Sorry for missing last week's episode. We have been... fuck, man, I mean, going 10 rounds with our health insurance company to try and get our son to have a surgery to repair his eardrum, to reverse hearing loss. And

our insurance company is like, "Hm, let us think about it for a couple months."

**Rachel:** The problem, this may be hugely relatable, the problem is that Griffin switched insurance, and that apparently is impossible. [chuckles] Because anything that happened before that was approved now has to be approved again.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Even if it is the most obviously approvable thing.

**Griffin:** Yeah, even if he had the same surgery on his other ear not six months ago. And so, it's so infuriating. Because like, I don't know, I'm not going to beg for sympathy or anything, but like our shit is pretty wild all the time. And we—to clear the decks in the way that we did for this thing, to be then turned away in the like pre-op kind of patient room is—

**Rachel:** Yeah, I mean—

**Griffin:** Is so, so, so miserable.

**Rachel:** I mean, we could talk about this for a whole episode, but the—

**Griffin:** It is decidedly unwonderful.

**Rachel:** Yeah, yeah. I will just say, and apparently this is—happens a lot, I was actually exchanging Marco Polos with Teresa about this and she's like, it's not uncommon to call an insurance place, have one person tell you one thing, and then call again, and the other person tells you the opposite thing.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And that is what has happened to us a lot.

**Griffin:** So, it's been a—it's been a really—and also, everyone's sick again. It's just been like a really fuckin' pretty miserable week.

**Rachel:** And there's still snow on the ground—

**Griffin:** There's still fuckin' snow on the ground.

**Rachel:** From like a month ago. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** From a month ago. But Love Is Blind came in, and just like some of these dude—there's one guy who like can't decide between two women, which is not the most novel thing. But he is also kind of like—has some trouble kind of like articulating. A lot of the dudes are like kind of slick with it, where they'll like kind of sell 'em. And this guy, just like these two women will be like, "You need to pick one of us." And all he can say is like, "This is the craziest day of my life."

**Rachel:** "This is crazy, man."

**Griffin:** "This is so crazy."

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** "Today is crazy." And then it'll be the day after, he'll be like, "Yesterday was one of the craziest days of my whole life. It was so crazy."

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** And it's like, dude, you need to say something. You need to say something of substance for these people.

**Rachel:** Yeah, and then he would go on to like praise whatever woman he was talking to.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** But never ask any questions about her or seem interested in how she was feeling, which—

**Griffin:** 101, shit dude.

**Rachel:** Which kind of blew up a little bit.

**Griffin:** 101! Yeah, absolutely. Anyway, yeah, it's—I'm having fun watching it.

**Rachel:** Yeah. No, that's, very true.

**Griffin:** And there's a couple of couples who seem genuinely very into each other! Which I don't know that I could say about last season—

**Rachel:** Oh, can we—[chuckles]

**Griffin:** A couple of like face to face meetings that were like, oh, that's so nice actually.

**Rachel:** Can we just briefly reference the laugh we got out of the like thumbnail art for Love is Blind?

**Griffin:** Ah, man! Okay, so—

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** If you go—

**Rachel:** I don't—I don't want to suggest that we have any problem with their appearance normally.

**Griffin:** No.

**Rachel:** What has happened with this photo though is that they—

**Griffin:** It's Nick and—it's Nick—

**Rachel:** Nick and Vanessa. [titters]

**Griffin:** And Vanessa. And there—

**Rachel:** Vanessa—[chuckles] Vanessa has what I've been calling Wilma Flintstone proportions in this arc.

**Griffin:** It's crazy! And it's so clearly like touched up, but it is touched up in a way that like sort of defies—she looks like... she looks like a cartoon barbell that like Popeye might lift. Just like two—

**Rachel:** Yeah, and she's wearing like leopard print too.

**Griffin:** Yeah. And so like that's clearly like, there's something that has been done here. But then my man Nick is like this perfect rectangular—he looks like Strong Mad, if you watched the Homestar Runner—

**Rachel:** Yeah. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** And like also, one of his arms is like huge, and one of his hands is like huge. It's like, it looks crazy! It's just a crazy—

**Rachel:** It's crazy, it makes me laugh every time.

**Griffin:** It makes me laugh every time I see it, and it reminds me of the MBMBaM TV show poster that they made—were made—they made my oldest brother, Justin, seem like he was about half my size, which is so strange.

**Rachel:** [titters] Just like a very small man.

**Griffin:** There's people out there who work on promotional materials for television programs, and they do not have any oversight. They have no one saying like, "Dude, stop." [chuckles]

**Rachel:** Well, and this may be AI too. I don't know exactly what AI can do, but this may be AI. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Maybe. So, we're talking about the Olympics!

**Rachel:** The Olympics.

**Griffin:** We came at it from a couple of different perspectives. What is your—what is your Olympic topic this week, my dear?

**Rachel:** So, I, and this may be true for a lot of people, you know, I've been getting pushed a lot of clips of Olympics. I don't do TikTok, which, again, is a little brag that I like, but—[chuckles]

**Griffin:** I think we both recognize it is no longer a brag, and more sort of obstinate kind of—

**Rachel:** But I do Instagram, so it's not like I'm perfect, and I get a lot of Instagram like meme whatever. And I got one for ski ballet.

**Griffin:** Oh, what?

**Rachel:** Which used to be a sport as recent as like the '80s, and it is no longer a sport in the Winter Games. But it made me curious about the fallen wonderful sports of the Olympics, and so I did a little research.

**Griffin:** Just the Winter Olympics, or the—or all of them?

**Rachel:** No, the whole—the whole thing.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** And so, I brought—I brought some to talk about.

**Griffin:** I'm so excited. I feel like we've glanced off of this in the past because I know we have talked about on this show how art used to be an Olympic—like doing art was an Olympic sport.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Which is still kind of unbelievable to me, but would really, I think, be so rad.

**Rachel:** So, the one I just reference ski ballet.

**Griffin:** Yeah, how does that even work?

**Rachel:** So, it kind of follows figure skating in that there's spins and jumps, and a two-minute routine choreographed to music.

**Griffin:** On... skis?

**Rachel:** On skis, Like on like a ski-like surface, like on snow.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** They have poles—

**Griffin:** One of my favorite ski surfaces.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] They have poles, which kind of aids, you can imagine, in the like spins and jumps.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** They can put pressure on a pole and kind of spin around.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** But it was in the '80s and '90s—it became popular in the mid '70s. And there's a whole slew of Olympians that have won medals in ski ballet, as recent as the 1992 Olympics.

**Griffin:** Did you watch this taking place?

**Rachel:** No.

**Griffin:** Did you watch?

**Rachel:** I don't remember this at all. But like if you look it up, you can see clips from these previous competitions.

**Griffin:** Yeah. I mean—

**Rachel:** And it's wild when that music hits!

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

**Rachel:** To be outdoors, you know? And think about like how loud this must be.

**Griffin:** Oh, sure! I didn't even think about that. Yeah, they must be booming it.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Let's see. Oh, wow.

**Rachel:** It's pretty much what you would picture, though, like if you had to imagine. It's like-

**Griffin:** Yeah, but they're like wearing—but they're wearing like the big pants and everything—holy shit, someone just did a flip off their poles! This rules, actually! Why did this stop being a sport?!

**Rachel:** [chuckles] I mean, everything that you see, whenever a sport disappears in the Olympics, it just suggested that it has kind of fallen out of fashion and not popular enough.

**Griffin:** I mean, it's—

**Rachel:** Which is hard to imagine.

**Griffin:** Yeah, no, I mean... [chuckles] I kind of get it. Like it's sort of wild to see—but I mean, baby, there's—so many people are doing flips, and most of them are doing them off the polls. It looks so wild. It looks wrong! But cool also.

**Rachel:** Yeah, so I did like a little—because obviously everyone knows like the Olympics have been around forever, like beginning of times Olympics. Because, you know, they came from that time period in Greece when it was

happening. [chuckles] But the modern Olympics as we know it today was founded by the—by this fancy French aristocrat, Baron Pierre de Coubertin.

**Griffin:** Cool.

**Rachel:** Founded the International Olympic Committee in 1894, and the first modern games as we know it was in Athens in 1896. So, a lot of—a lot of sports, not like ski ballet, but a lot of the ones I'm going to read are from those early days of Olympics.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** And you have to think about it like no television, obviously.

**Griffin:** What?

**Rachel:** [chuckles] You know, and like not a lot of modern equipment, so a lot of the stuff feels kind of like, you know, things you could do at home, but only occurred in one Olympics. So the first one I'm going to talk about, and this is from like a Reuters article that I found, is—and this will remind you of like Ninja Warrior and Physical: 100, but the first one I found is 200-meter obstacle swimming.

**Griffin:** Awesome!

**Rachel:** Was only in the 1900 Olympics.

**Griffin:** Obstacle swimming?

**Rachel:** And so the idea is, you dive in the water, and then you have to climb over a pole. And then you dive in the water, and you'd have to get into a small boat. And then you dive in the water, and have to go under another small boat. And then you would finish.

**Griffin:** That's cool! Getting into a boat is so hard. That absolutely should be an Olympic sport.

**Rachel:** I know. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** You go swimming on like a pontoon boat with your friends, you hop off the boat, and then it's like, "Time to get back on!" And then you like begin hoisting yourself and you're like, "Oh, wait, fuck. What if I can't do it? What if I live in the water now? Absolutely, that should be an Olympic sport."

**Rachel:** Yeah, it's absolutely wild. There's also plunge for distance.

**Griffin:** Like how deep into the water do you go?

**Rachel:** So you would have to do like a stand-up dive from like a springless surface, and then you couldn't move, and you just had to kind of glide underwater as far as possible.

**Griffin:** Well, I can see why they stopped doing that, because it feels like you could really over commit to the bit and then become dead.

**Rachel:** Yeah. [chuckles] You had to remain motionless until you're—you rose above the water.

**Griffin:** Okay. That one, I think, is okay that it went.

**Rachel:** But again, like 1904, you're not seeing anything that's happening underwater, right?

**Griffin:** Yeah, who's judging that. I don't understand.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] I mean, they're just standing on the side of the pool, I guess, and measuring how far they came.

**Griffin:** I guess so?

**Rachel:** But you can't tell if they're moving or not underneath obviously. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Right, yeah.

**Rachel:** There's another competition like this called Underwater swim, which again, was in the 1900 Olympics, but it was in the Seine River. And you got a point for every second you stayed underwater, and two points for every meter under water.

**Griffin:** Yeah, no, don't do that. That seems bad.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** You can win if you—[chuckles] don't come out to—breathe? Don't breathe, what are you doing? Don't you want to win?

**Rachel:** The one that reminded me a lot of Physical: 100 that I wish was still a thing, was tug of war.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Oh, god, that seems pretty iconic to me.

**Rachel:** I know! This happened a lot. This was 1900, 1904, 1908, 1912, and then a small gap, and then 1920. And then it stopped—

**Griffin:** And then it hasn't been since 1920, really?

**Rachel:** Yeah... I know...

**Griffin:** God, bring that back, man, that would be so cool. Because I can't—hm... Do you think it lasts for a long time, tug of war?

**Rachel:** Maybe. I don't have a lot of information about how—

**Griffin:** I feel like tug of war is like tic-tac-toe, I feel like it's a solved game. Where like people know like there's a way to brace yourself so that it becomes like a real war of attrition, and I could see that maybe not being the most thrilling.

**Rachel:** Yeah, and this was like five to eight team members, so you could like stack your team in such a way to really dominate.

**Griffin:** Yeah, for sure.

**Rachel:** Another one I found, all around dumbbell lifts, which was a series of 10 exercises over two days. This was only in 1904. A competitor would have a series of heavy dumbbell lifts. On the first day, they were to perform five instructed lifts, and then on the second day, four instructed lifts, plus a freestyle lift. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Whoa!

**Rachel:** But you can see there's like a little picture of like different ways you had to lift the dumbbells.

**Griffin:** Yeah, that doesn't seem that exciting to me, actually. I want to see the big weight, I want to see trembling. I want them to drop it and yell.

**Rachel:** Oh, of course. Of course. And it's wild! There are—I mean, there are... it, again, is surprising that this was a thing, and that people got medals for it.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** There are a lot more. Croquet was on there.

**Griffin:** Bummer, man. I fuckin' love croquet so much.

**Rachel:** Yeah, I know. Solo synchronized swimming. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yeah, so I've heard that before.

**Rachel:** It was called artistic swimming.

**Griffin:** So it was just like... they should call it something else, right? Because it's just like rhythmic water dancing, sort of.

**Rachel:** Yeah, kind of like water aerobics, a little bit. Rope climbing, which, again, I think would be cool to watch.

**Griffin:** Yeah, for sure. There's climbing events—there's like rock climbing events now, right, in the Olympics?

**Rachel:** Yeah, I think so.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** I think so. Anyway, it's super—

**Griffin:** Bouldering I think they do.

**Rachel:** It's super cool to look at this. I would say if you are like, "Ah, man, this is a bummer," you know, you should join us in watching Ninja Warrior and Physical: 100.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** Because a lot of those things occur, and it really scratches the itch.

**Griffin:** Have they announced whether break dancing will return in the 2028 Olympics?

**Rachel:** Oh, I don't know.

**Griffin:** Let's look. Let me do a quick cursory google. It will not be returning.

**Rachel:** Whoa?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** One and done?

**Griffin:** One and done. I guess—

**Rachel:** Maybe it was too hard to judge?

**Griffin:** Oh, no, so they actually decided it would not return before even it had debuted in the 2024 Olympics.

**Rachel:** Wild?

**Griffin:** Yeah... that's a bummer. I really enjoyed it. Obviously like Ray Gun, was that her—

**Rachel:** Yeah. [titters]

**Griffin:** That was like the thing that everyone talked about, and that was a shame. There was a lot of like really, really—

**Rachel:** Yeah, so it's the International Olympic Committee that makes all these decisions. And a lot of it I think is just based on popularity, which is wild. But I guess, you know, it's a program on television, and they want people to watch it.

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure.

**Rachel:** And it's just like any other show, in that if it's not popular, they're gonna get rid of it. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Yeah. Hey, can I steal you away?

**Rachel:** Yes.

[theme music plays]

[ad break]

**Griffin:** Out with the old, in with the new, because I'm talking about the only new sport debuting in the 2026 Winter Olympic Games.

**Rachel:** The only new one?

**Griffin:** The only new sport debuting in the 2026 Winter Olympic Games, and that sport is Skibo! Skimo.

**Rachel:** Is that what they call it?

**Griffin:** They call it skimo, which is short for ski mountaineering. And—

**Rachel:** Is that like cross country skiing?

**Griffin:** Babe, no, it's up-country skiing.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** It is one of the most exhausting human endeavors I can ever imagine undertaking. I watched some video of people doing it, and it's just crazy.

**Rachel:** Are they hiking in skis?

**Griffin:** So, here's what it is, okay? There's a lot of ski-based events. We figured out how to measure people's athleticism on skis in a lot of different ways.

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

**Griffin:** You have alpine, downhill, you have your trick-based freestyle skiing, you have flat ground cross country. In some of them they're like, "Here's a gun. Ski, and then shoot stuff in a biathlon."

**Rachel:** [chuckles] Yeah.

**Griffin:** And you're like, surely, we've discovered every hard thing you can do on skis? What ski mountaineering says is, hey, you know how you take like a chair lift or a funicular to get up to the top of the hill to do like skiing?

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** What if we got rid of that?

**Rachel:** Oh?

**Griffin:** And instead, you had to ski the fuck up the mountain that you would then have to ski back down. That is what ski mountaineering is.

**Rachel:** Sorry, I'm trying to look at pictures of this, and it does look like hiking on skis.

**Griffin:** So, there's multiple different kind of like steps to it. But ultimately, it is a sport of uphill skiing, in defiance of gravity and God's will. It's new to the 2026 Olympics. It actually previewed during the 2020 Winter Youth Olympics, where it was a big success. And in the 2026 Olympics, there's three different categories, there's the men's sprint, the women's sprint and the mixed gender relay.

There's weirdly not a ton of specifics about like what the course looks like in Borneo, Italy, at the Stelvio Ski Center. The course takes roughly three and a half minutes to complete, with a total elevation climb of 70 meters. Which doesn't sound like a lot of meters, but then you remember that you're doing a lot of that on skis, uphill, which just remains insane.

**Rachel:** Yeah...

**Griffin:** So, how it works is you are wearing skis at the start of the race. Those skis are lighter weight than a lot of your more traditional ski-based sports. And they also have a kind of grip tape on the underside of them to provide some traction, so that you aren't just constantly sliding—

**Rachel:** Yeah, I'm watching a video, and when they're on like steady terrain, it's almost like they're running.

**Griffin:** It is almost like they're running. It's not a lot of like planting and then pushing yourself along, like you see in like a cross-country thing.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** it is just running uphill in skis, basically. And you're doing that—it's not like the steepest parts of the course where you're doing the on-ski ascent, right? But at a certain point you reach what are called backpack

checkpoints. You pop your skis off and you strap them to your backpack, and now you are hiking.

**Rachel:** Whoa!

**Griffin:** And during these parts of the course, usually, like the terrain becomes a bit choppier, right? And also, it's not a straight shot uphill. Sometimes the course will kind of do a serpentine pattern going up and down over this kind of rough snow, and you're having to kind of just like hike up it and down the hill, and then back up, and then back down, and then back up, kind of taking this winding path. Until you reach another backpack checkpoint where you have to put the skis back on—

**Rachel:** Wild.

**Griffin:** Finish the climb. And then once you reach the top of the course, you rip the tape off of the bottom of your skis, and then you go down a like slalom style sort of thing between checkpoints—

**Rachel:** Wild!

**Griffin:** Until you reach the bottom. Again, it takes about three minutes to run the sprints of this course. For the mixed gender relay, the athletes have to run the course—it's a longer course, and they have to run it twice. So first, the woman of the pair runs the course twice before tagging in the male athlete to then do the same.

**Rachel:** Huh.

**Griffin:** So, I can't imagine doing this fucking once, let alone twice in a row on a longer course. It just seems... it just seems wild. I don't understand how the human body can possibly do this.

**Rachel:** Yeah, and I always wonder too with a new sport like how they get the word out, you know?

**Griffin:** So, the sport of ski mountaineering, first of all, I mean, it has like pretty ancient origins.

**Rachel:** Yeah, I could see that.

**Griffin:** And it's informed by a lot of, you know, a lot of cross-country stuff and a lot of, you know, alpine skiing. It gained popularity first like in Europe around the Alps. The International Council of Ski Mountaineering Competitions formed between a handful of countries in Europe in 1999.

The first official ski mountaineering championship in North America wasn't founded until 2012. But since they announced that the sport would be joining the 2026 Olympics back in 2021, it has had a sort of boom in popularity. And the audience that it has most like attracted to the sport are like endurance athletes, like long distance cyclers and marathon runners—

**Rachel:** Yeah! I was gonna say like, you know the fun part of skiing? It's not that. That's actually not as much what you're doing. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Yeah, no, the fun part of skiing is, one, when you're done and you get to go chill and drink a hot beverage. The second is going fast down the mountain.

**Rachel:** Exactly, yeah.

**Griffin:** The third is getting to sit on a chair lift and catch up with your friends. But they don't do that in skimo.

**Rachel:** No.

**Griffin:** In skimo, you are running uphill on skis, and it just sounds absolutely wild. I don't know, man, there's a lot of things you can watch people do during the Olympics that seem like beyond the realm of human capability. But just seeing some clips of people doing skimo, it really feels like it is truly on a whole other level.

**Rachel:** Well, and I always think too of like commentators. Like they have to keep up some kind of patter while you're watching it. And I guess there are certain techniques, maybe? But it just seems like the people that are commentating would just be like, "He's doing it." [laughs]

**Griffin:** "He's going so fast, holy shit."

**Rachel:** "Look at—look at those powerful legs." [chuckles]

**Griffin:** There's like, I mean, obviously, there's a lot more technique to it than that. There's a lot of technique in the backpack checkpoints part of it.

**Rachel:** Yeah, that's true.

**Griffin:** It's like, how fast—how fast can you get—it's like pit crew style, how fast can you get your skis off.

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** How fast can you put them back on, and how fast can you rip that tape off? And then like, you have to be good at alpine skiing! Then you have to go down between these like flags, you have to actually do good at that. I think on the track at the 2026 Olympics, there's like a slight incline that you also have to go back up once you finish the course to get to the finish line.

**Rachel:** Oh?

**Griffin:** So like there's a little bit of a—one final push that you have to do. I'll be very, very curious. Also like, it is a simultaneous race. During the sprints, you are watching like I think like 20 people—

**Rachel:** Wow!

**Griffin:** Fuckin' running up the hill all at the same time.

**Rachel:** That's cool.

**Griffin:** I don't actually know if it's happened before. Maybe the clips I've seen were from the 2020 Youth Winter Olympics. But I don't know, man, it is weird! It is weird to see. It would be like if there was... like a speed skating event where like, halfway through, they had to pop their skates off and then do like a tour de stade around the bleachers, around the ice,

before they were allowed to finish speed skating. It's just kind of a wild mash up, but one that, I don't know, I think it seems pretty cool and it—the people who finish it seem the most tired I've ever seen people before.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Like most clips you see of people finishing a skimo course, they just immediately kind of ragdoll to the ground—

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Because they left it all out there.

**Rachel:** For whatever reason, maybe because you said mountaineering, at first I was picturing them like going up like a tree-filled incline. So like, not only are they going uphill, but they're having to go around trees in a forest. That's what I was picturing. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** You were imagining like an event that was like SkiFree, where you're having to go over ramps, between trees, and then not get eaten by a Yeti—

**Rachel:** Yeah, I think I was thinking of like orienteering, which again, I've never done. I've also never really skied. I say "really" because in St. Louis, I don't know if it's still there, but there used to be this place called The Hidden Valley, that had, from what I understand, two hills. And I went there in like eighth grade, I think, and spent half a day. So I like, I feel like I can't count that. Anyway, what I'm thinking of I think is orienteering, where you go through the woods and get little flags or something?

**Griffin:** That sounds cool.

**Rachel:** But again, I haven't done that.

**Griffin:** Do you get to keep the flags when you're done?

**Rachel:** I think maybe you just find the flag and then go to the next one?

**Griffin:** You don't get to keep the flags?!

**Rachel:** I don't know. I shouldn't have started talking about this, I don't know anything about orienteering.

**Griffin:** [chuckles] Anyway, I have decided to become a big skimo fan. And I think mostly it's because of the name. I didn't think they were going to come up with a Winter Olympics sport with a better name than the skeleton, but skimo I think has surpassed it in my mind.

**Rachel:** Skimo should be the name of the little mascot.

**Griffin:** There should be a mascot called Skimo.

**Rachel:** I think the mascots are ferrets this year?

**Griffin:** Or weasels?

**Rachel:** Or weasels, yeah—

**Griffin:** They're long, long sort of rodents.

**Rachel:** Yeah, they're weasels.

**Griffin:** Cute. Love 'em, I love these guys. I love an animal Olympic mascot, and not like it's the—it's a tower of some sort. It's a...

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Hey, do you want to know what our friends at home are talking about?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Tyler says, "My Small Wonder is vacation planning. I'm going to be traveling this summer, and it's reminded me how fun and exciting it is to look around Google Maps for places to go and things to do when you're going somewhere. It's such a great thing to look forward to."

**Rachel:** Oh, yeah, Griffin—

**Griffin:** I miss this so much.

**Rachel:** Griffin used to be the king of this.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** We have several Word documents of like agendas, day by day.

**Griffin:** Just two. One for our trip to our honeymoon in Japan, and then one for our trip to Hong Kong.

**Rachel:** Which, yeah, when you're traveling internationally, you really do kind of have to prepare in advance, because it's not going to necessarily be easy to navigate in a place where you don't know the language.

**Griffin:** Right. That's—well, Hong Kong is pretty easy, just because there's a lot of—

**Rachel:** Well, yeah. But we didn't—I don't think we knew that for sure when we went?

**Griffin:** No, that's true. And it's depending on which like part of Hong Kong you were in. That's the other thing, is we used to like give these guides out to people like we were fuckin'... Zagats or something, but now they're so—

**Rachel:** I did not long ago! I had friends go to Japan, and I pulled out our Japan—

**Griffin:** All that shit's outdated, man! All that shit's gone.

**Rachel:** I know. There's no Robot Restaurant anymore.

**Griffin:** No Robot Restaurant. Half those shrines are—

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** [chuckles] That's not true, the shrines are probably still rockin'.

**Rachel:** Shrines will still be there. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** One of 'em was actually under construction for a long time. That big one up on the—up on the hill with all the lattice work, that I can't remember the name of. Anyway! Thank you so much for listening. Please write us at [wonderfulpodcast@gmail.com](mailto:wonderfulpodcast@gmail.com) with your own submissions that we can consider here at the end of the 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. And thank you so much to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. You can go to [maximumfun.org](http://maximumfun.org), check out all the stuff that we've got going on over there, all kinds of great shows. We got merch over at [mcelroymerch.com](http://mcelroymerch.com). There's a 20 Make It Stick poster designed by Lucas Hesperheide, that absolutely rules.

**Rachel:** And guys, Griffin's book, his Choose Your Own Adventure book is about to be in the world, and you can pre-order that. It's called The Stowaway.

**Griffin:** Yeah, it's a—we got a big box of 'em here. It's a very—it's a—I'm really proud of it. I'm really, really proud of it. It is a—

**Rachel:** Yeah, yeah! It's incredible. It seems really challenging to do what you did.

**Griffin:** It was not easy. And it's, you know, primarily, obviously, it's a Choose Your Own Adventure book designed for younger readers in the eight to 12 kind of middle grade age range. But I just think it's a cool take on this formula, and it's an honor to have written it, because I loved these books growing up.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And it's 10 bucks for the book, and if you pre-order it at [bit.ly/griffinstowaway](http://bit.ly/griffinstowaway), that would truly mean a lot to me, because I'm very proud of this book, and I hope folks like it. Oh, we have a bunch of streaming that we're doing on our YouTube channel over at The McElroy Family, on YouTube, mostly us playing games and stuff.

Me and Justin and Travis are all streaming by ourselves, one day a week. I'm doing a randomized Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask—not speed run, it's going very slow actually, but I'm playing that every Friday. It's called Trial by Fieri, and it's a lot of fun. And then every Tuesday, we all get together, Me and Juice and Trav, to play games. And the last Tuesday of every month, we do McElroy Family Clubhouse.

There's so much fun stuff happening over there, and we're working really hard on it. So, if you like our stuff, I bet you'll like that too, over at The McElroy Family, on YouTube. Or you can follow @McElroyEntertainmentSystem for all of our gaming stuff on Instagram. That's it! Thank you so much for listening, have a great rest of your week. Hump day.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Right? *And...*

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** We'll catch you next time!

**Rachel:** Do the Olympic theme again.

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure. *Pa-pa-pa-pa-pa, pa-pa-pa!*

**Rachel:** No...

**Griffin:** *Pa-pa-pa-pa-pa, pah! Pa-pa, pa-pa-pa, pa-pa! Olympics!*

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

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