

Wonderful! 415: A Torrid Love Affair with Wario

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

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hello! This is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is Wonderful!

Griffin: [spoofs car sounds and sings] Shut up and drive! It's Max Fun Drive time, and we're here, part of the Max Fun network, and have been, basically from the jump, here at Rosebuddies/Wonderful Incorporated.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That's the—that's the name of our—

Rachel: We did a few before we joined, just to feel like we had our sea legs.

Griffin: Just to feel it out, yeah. But then it felt right, didn't it?

Rachel: Yeah, I think we were maybe five or six episodes in and we were like—

Griffin: It feels right! It feels like the time.

Rachel: Max Fun let us—

Griffin: We reached out—

Rachel: Let us take the helm.

Griffin: We reached out to Jesse and he was like, "It's so funny, I was just reaching out to you."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: He said it feels like it's time. He said, "It feels like you're ready to drive." That was many moons ago. And now it's 2026. Here we are at the wheel again. [spoofs a car sound and sings] Shut up and drive. We're driving, for the Max Fun Drive. And what is that, you may say, because you're a new listener, or a particularly inattentive longtime listener.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Well, for two weeks each year, we come to you, hat in hand, and it's a—it's a cool hat. It's not like a jokey top hat or something. It's like a cool baseball cap. And we say, hey, if you chip in a little bit of money our way to help us make our shows and pay our staff and, you know, upgrade our equipment and put literal food on our tables, we'll give you some bonus content, some extra stuff along the way, and you'll get the good feeling in your heart that you knew that you helped support something that you enjoy listening to so directly.

Rachel: And a lot of thank yous. You know, I think a lot of people reserve their thank yous for people they don't know very well.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: At restaurants and grocery stores. Or they save it up, you know, maybe once a year for, you know, a Mother's Day, a Father's Day.

Griffin: Sure, sure, sure.

Rachel: We're offering you—

Griffin: We're blasting off with thanks yous.

Rachel: The chance to be thanked.

Griffin: We're like Legolas, with—but we have thank yous instead of arrows, in our quiver. But we're still launching 'em, three at a time, into your orc ass.

Rachel: I can't play with you in that space.

Griffin: I know! Sometimes it's scary because I'll turn back and I'll be like, where'd Rachel go? And then I'll remember.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: You're standing on business that you will not consume The Lord of the Rings franchise anytime soon.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Anyway, we're going to talk more about the drive and the stuff that you can get for supporting us, even as low as just \$5 a month. Spoiler, it's a ton of bonus content, including our bo-co this year for Wonderful is—do you want to announce it?

Rachel: I watched The Mummy with Griffin, and it was my first time seeing it. It was the second Brendan Fraser film I'd ever seen.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And I give my, you know, reactions to it.

Griffin: You're twisted, skewed, like fucked up like kind of view on The Mummy.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It's must-see—must-see podcast TV. And you can get that, and literally like hundreds of hours of other bonus content throughout the history of time. And you can help us do that by going to maximumfun.org/join. You pick the shows that you listen to, your money goes directly to them,

Maximum Fun takes a bit to help with the administrative stuff that we can't do, don't know how to do, rely on them to do. And you get, again, the satisfaction of knowing that you help make this show possible. So—

Rachel: You're a member.

Griffin: You're a member.

Rachel: You can add it to your LinkedIn!

Griffin: Sure!

Rachel: You can say, "Member of Maximum Fun—"

Griffin: Absolutely!

Rachel: "2026."

Griffin: I'm not gonna say anything?

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Put me down as a reference! I'm not gonna do a good job, but—and they probably won't know how to get at me, but maximumfun.org/join. Thank you. We'll talk more about it later. Do you have a Small Wonder? Hm?

Rachel: I'm gonna say... Tower of Terror.

Griffin: Oh, manzies.

Rachel: I've been thinking about that one.

Griffin: We went on the—we went to—we did a little Disney trip, with the boys.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: And some good friends, over spring break this past week. And—

Rachel: DC has a very late spring break, in case you're confused and thinking we're recording this like weeks in advance. No, we just had spring break last week in April.

Griffin: Tower of Terror has always been sort of our white whale, hasn't it? Because the—

Rachel: We wanted to, but our kids don't.

Griffin: For whatever reason, Hollywood Studios and Animal Kingdom drain the life out of children, as if under some sort of necromancer's curse. Truly every step—

Rachel: Animal Kingdom—Animal Kingdom I get, because there aren't a lot of rides there.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: Particularly for small kids.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But Hollywood Studios, there's a lot there for kids now.

Griffin: Yeah, but it's still—

Rachel: But for whatever reason—

Griffin: It's hard to get a kid past lunch to stick around Hollywood Studios.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That's why every time we've gone to Disney been like, please, can we—can we please go ride Tower of Terror? Please!

Rachel: So, our secret was to leave lunch early, have our friends stay with the boys through their dessert character meeting, whatever, and like run to Hollywood Studios, or run to Tower of Terror, and—

Griffin: Our bellies full of the buffet's finest.

Rachel: [chuckles] We did get in line and realize, you know, the ride, you go up and you fall, and then you go up and then you fall again, and I thought we did just finish—

Griffin: Just snarfed—just like lots of miso salmon, like tons.

Rachel: And you also had to pee a little bit, as I recall?

Griffin: I had to pee pretty bad, but we couldn't—again, we were trying to—so, I don't know, superstitious was I, that we'd get like halfway through the line and then we'd get a text from our friends like, "Hey, Henry ate a fork," or something.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Like would do some sort of way to sabotage our tower of te—but yeah, that's a good ride! It was pretty fun.

Rachel: It's really good.

Griffin: Right over the plate.

Rachel: Even though like obviously the Twilight Zone conceit is a little confusing, I imagine, for most of the population now.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: The whole ambiance.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: You know? The narrative, the experience, A plus.

Griffin: Great. I mean, I'll keep it going and say Super Nintendo World.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Super Nintendo World, Super Nintendo Land? Super Nintendo... I'm going to say world.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: One of the parks—I mean it exists in other places sort of as its own deal, but we went to the one in Orlando that is part of Epic Universe. Epic Universe, I don't know, we didn't do everything, so I'm a—I don't know, I'm a little bit torn on whether I would want to spend like a whole day there again necessarily.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But the Super Nintendo World absolutely beats ass, and it is very cool. Like the rides are great.

Rachel: So immersive too.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: The way they have it set up, like, you can't see anything else in the park.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like you are in the world—

Griffin: Its very smart.

Rachel: And it is the only thing around.

Griffin: There's the Mario Kart ride, which uses like AR stuff, which I *loved*, and you were a bit mixed on.

Rachel: Too busy for me.

Griffin: Too busy. But the mine cart madness, the Donkey Kong ride beats ass.

Rachel: The Donkey Kong ride was phenomenal.

Griffin: The Yoshi chill ride for little guys is great. But my whole thing with Super Nintendo World is like, I've never been to a theme park where I actually really loved all the guys. Like, when we go to Disney World and it's like, oh, the Swiss family Robinson tree house. I love those guy—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Like it's like, you know, I remember Aladdin. Yeah, I'll ride his carpet, I remember—but here, I get to ride on a Mario Kart? With my best friend, Yoshi, who was there for me growing up in so many different ways?

Rachel: I know.

Griffin: It's a unique experience.

Rachel: It was interesting, as a member of this family, to watch you and Henry experience it at the same time.

Griffin: True.

Rachel: You know, like the level of enthusiasm was very similar. But obviously, you were coming at it with a lot of history.

Griffin: A lot of history.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: I... had a torrid love affair with Wario.

Rachel: Wow.

Griffin: He doesn't show up—I don't think I saw hide nor hair of his ass.

Rachel: No, you were looking for him, too!

Griffin: I was looking for him.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I was looking for him. They got a lot of—they got a lot of deep cut dudes in there.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: No Funky Kong in the Donkey Kong land, which I think is bullshit.

Rachel: Yeah, that was kind of outrageous.

Griffin: They have a little plane that they're selling like, you know, Donkey Kong merch out of. And it's like—it's called Funky's Cool Flight or something. And Funky Kong's not even in it?!

Rachel: They had the lady one, right? Didn't we see her?

Griffin: I didn't see Candy Kong nowhere!

Rachel: I didn't see Candy either.

Griffin: No. Or do you mean Dixie Kong? There's two lady ones, I think. Anyway!

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: It was so cool to like be in a world of Nintendo stuff. I don't know if I'll want to go back next year.

Rachel: Yeah, a little small. I mean, the thing is like you really can see all of it—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: In a very short amount of time.

Griffin: But still very cool.

Rachel: Still very cool, yeah.

Griffin: You go first this week.

Rachel: I do!

Griffin: What would you like to talk about?

Rachel: My topic follows kind of our spring break, in that I am talking about on-ride photos.

Griffin: Yeah, sure. I love these guys!

Rachel: This continues to blow my mind, because I am not one of those people that's great at spotting the camera and having the fun pose. But Griffin—

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Griffin... is amazing—

Griffin: I know my—I know my—first of all—

Rachel: You know your angles.

Griffin: I know my angles. That's like integral. Before you even can do like the background work of like where's the camera on the Seven Dwarfs Mine Train, so I can be... so I can smize, in the way that is necessary for me. You always have to be on. If you're always on, you don't have to get on.

Rachel: [chuckles] Yeah, I know, and that is your classical training speaking.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: There's some—like Pirates of the Caribbean, I know—

Griffin: Ah, yes.

Rachel: Where that camera is.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah.

Rachel: I'm not great at pulling a face, but I know when it's coming. But like a roller coaster, like how do you know? How do you remember?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I found in my research that there are actual websites that will give you a heads up. [chuckles]

Griffin: That's great! A sort of RunPee for coasters.

Rachel: Exactly. And I think, I mean, they're mostly like fan-made like blog situations. But it was kind of nice to be like, hey, around the third corner—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: It will come—and I was like, oh, okay, so people can really practice, because there are a lot of great ones out there.

Griffin: A lot of great ride pics out there.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: I have an all-timer that I saw on the internet one time, and it was four young men on the Splash Mountain log flume ride, at Magic Kingdom. And as they were going down, one of them was holding a GameCube, one of

them was holding a little TV, and two of them were playing controllers, and they were playing like Smash—

Rachel: Amazing.

Griffin: Brothers Melee as going—as they were going down.

Rachel: Amazing.

Griffin: I saw that and I thought, anything is possible. It really put some pep in my step.

Rachel: My favorite of yours are the Frozen ones.

Griffin: Yeah! This year's was a bit derivative. This year's was a bit derivative.

Rachel: Can I ask you—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And this is not something I would ever ask in front of our son.

Griffin: No, please.

Rachel: But the first one I saw of you—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Where you were reacting to the onslaught of water.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Was that posed? Or was—

Griffin: No, that was very real. So, on Frozen, you go down a little log flume, and you get a big splash down. And I don't know if they make the

water extra Arctic cold. I don't know if they're saying like this is melted Olaf that you're floating through right now.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: But it was very cold, and it's—not every time, but sometimes when you go down, it will get up on you. This time, I had a sort of full body drenching, but it left my crotch largely alone. The photo in question that you are talking about, I—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It was as if Olaf himself had a big bucket. And he scooped it all up, and he dumped it right on my penis and balls.

Rachel: So, that was a real reaction?

Griffin: That was extr—that was a very real—that was a very, very reaction.

Rachel: Wow. I'll have to—

Griffin: The photo is me making a sort of like, "Ah!" Like a screaming face.

Rachel: Can we share that? Or can I share that on Instagram?

Griffin: It's almost certainly been shared before by our staff, who—

Rachel: I—yeah.

Griffin: Who loves to humiliate me.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: In a way that seems like some sort of psychosis, like they love shaming me. I'm like whatever, like if it—if—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: If it makes people go to maximumfun.org/join, I'll put out the pictures of me getting splashed with Olaf's runoff.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: But...

Rachel: Anyway—

Griffin: It's not my first sort of priority.

Rachel: I'm here not just to talk about your crotch area getting wet.

Griffin: Good.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: This is sweeps week, man, we gotta do stuff like that.

Rachel: But to talk a little bit about what I found in my research of ride photos.

Griffin: Yeah, please.

Rachel: From what I can tell, there is a like seminal article about this, because everybody else quoted it, and it is from Popular Science 2018. And it talks a little bit about the history of the kind of on-ride photo. They talked to many people who are like in business—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: To like, to do this. They have built the equipment and the tech to like take these photos. And they talk about kind of how you place the camera to get kind of the best, craziest photo.

Griffin: Okay, that's interesting.

Rachel: So, the Popular Science article interviewed Tony Sienkowski, the CEO and president of Get the Picture Core, a ride photography business—

Griffin: Interesting.

Rachel: Based in Pennsylvania.

Griffin: I would have never thought of that as a sort of third-party contract sort of business.

Rachel: Oh, yeah. No, I mean, if you even google this, like you will see different companies like promoting to somebody, I guess, like their product.

Griffin: Must be niche. Must be a niche market!

Rachel: Yeah, I can't imagine these big companies that have these theme parks, like Google, like, "I don't know, where am I going to find my ride photo?"

Griffin: Right, yeah!

Rachel: But they all have websites. [chuckles]

Griffin: "We need a—we need a camera for Tiana's Bayou Adventure. Get on Thumbtack."

Rachel: [chuckles] Put in a request.

Griffin: "My budget is \$250."

Rachel: [chuckles] So, Tony says, "We've come up with a highly technical term that we call the OSP, which stands for the Oh Shit Point."

Griffin: Nice.

Rachel: Kind of suggesting like you've gotta get the place that is most extreme, to get kind of the most extreme reaction. Ride photography as we know it today started in the 1980s, with the log flume.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: There was a time, Tim Baldwin, communications director of American Coaster Enthusiasts said—

Griffin: Awesome.

Rachel: Where you would pay for it in advance, and they would put a flag on your log. And so when you would splash down, they would take a picture of everyone who had a flag on their log.

Griffin: So, is this just a sort of manual guy with a—

Rachel: I'm guessing. [laughs]

Griffin: The thing and the smoke and the *pff!*

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: That's a cool look, by the way. I wish cameras still had that. The guy with the thing, that he holds it up and it—*pff!* Like explodes like that every time they take a picture. That's awesome.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Scary.

Rachel: "Quiet! Stop screaming, I need to concentrate!"

Griffin: Yeah. "Stay perfectly still!"

Rachel: [chuckles] In the late '80s, amusement parks started installing the ride cams on their most popular roller coasters. And according to our friend Tony referenced earlier in the article, Disney and Cedar Point in Sandusky, Ohio were among the first places to offer the service.

Griffin: Okay, yeah. I remember that distinctly from Cedar Point.

Rachel: Oh, yeah?

Griffin: Yeah, very much so.

Rachel: I've never been, I don't know.

Griffin: It's great! It's no Kings Island. [chuckles] Get at me, mid-Ohio citizens.

Rachel: You're so loyal to Kings Island.

Griffin: It's just where I went, babe.

Rachel: I know, I—

Griffin: It's just—it's just—

Rachel: But I'm not loyal to Six Flags? [chuckles]

Griffin: Well, Six Flags maybe isn't as good. Maybe it doesn't deserve your loyalty—

Rachel: That's fair.

Griffin: As much as Kings Island.

Rachel: That's fair.

Griffin: I stuck with Kings Island even after Paramount dropped it. I said, "You're still beautiful to me, Kings Island."

Rachel: "You're not good enough for Paramount, but you'll always be good enough for me."

Griffin: And it doesn't matter that maybe this roller coaster isn't called Top Gun anymore, and it's now called Fast Plane. [chuckles]

Rachel: Is it really called fast—

Griffin: Maybe this ride's not called Tomb Raider anymore, and instead it's called crypt go—Crypt Goer.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Crypt Goer. "I'll still love you no matter what, Kings Island."

Rachel: So, the tech.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Initially, it was a camera with a mechanical shutter, that was designed to continuously fire as a ride came by.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: But they were really... grinding through cameras quickly.

Griffin: Oh, sure!

Rachel: Because the constant shooting took a real toll on the parts.

Griffin: I imagine so, yeah.

Rachel: Lighting was also an early issue, because obviously you could only operate the camera in like good lighting conditions—

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: To get the photos you needed. Eventually, the company, in addition to putting the cameras, would install continuous lighting—

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Around it.

Griffin: Well, that would make it very easy to tell where the camera is. If there was just like some ring lights up around the next bend. [chuckles] You know.

Rachel: Because I did ask you like sometimes like, how do you know where the camera is? And you're like, "Oh, I see it."

Griffin: Sometimes you can see it.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Sometimes—you know what it is? Really, truly, if it's a ride I haven't been on before, I just have a good sort of idea of where that OSP is.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I feel like, well, this is the scariest part of this. Time to mog—

Rachel: That's true—

Griffin: Or whatever.

Rachel: I mean, if you're going up a big hill, for example, and you've already been up a big hill once—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: You've got to imagine the second hill—

Griffin: The second—

Rachel: Is the real one.

Griffin: Definitely where they're gonna take the pic.

Rachel: So, these days, most photography companies are using a combination of gigabit cameras and high-speed firewire cameras.

Griffin: Okay?

Rachel: For strobes, the industry standard is a product from Unilux called the Big Shot, a weather-resistant inspection light that can fire every 33 milliseconds.

Griffin: Okay, I was gonna ask, what kind of—what kind of FPS are we working with with these bad boys.

Rachel: And has a recycle time of 12 seconds. I don't know what that means.

Griffin: I think it may... maybe it takes it 12 seconds to charge back up again?

Rachel: Oh, maybe.

Griffin: Maybe. I don't know. Doesn't make sense, but—

Rachel: Video is also a new thing, we saw this at Disney.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: Where they are not just capturing the photo, but like a second of video—

Griffin: Now, that's no good. That I don't appreciate. That—I—you need to put—you don't take a video of someone when they think you're taking a picture, that's rude, and it leads to them looking kind of like an asshole.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Doing that just like, I'm trying to, you know, mug for the fuckin' Tron, and—but it's a video?! I look like such a jagoff—normally, I'd look so cool on these hollow bikes, with my Donkey Kong Country tank top that I'm wearing.

Rachel: How could you pose on Tron?

Griffin: Flex 'em.

Rachel: Oh, well, yeah.

Griffin: Flex 'em good, dude.

Rachel: I tried that too, but the angle didn't work for me.

Griffin: Well, they also sent us the wrong family for me—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: For me and Henry's bro. And it was like, here's Rachel and one of our friends zooming through, and then here's a—

Rachel: Two old men.

Griffin: Just a lovely couple, sort of in their maybe mid-60s. And they're having the time of their lives as well. It's not me—

Rachel: No.

Griffin: Per se, but—

Rachel: Maybe that was like a haunting look into the future for you.

Griffin: Oh, shit. The bikes on Tron go so fast, they Tron you into the future.

Rachel: [chuckles] They Tron you.

Griffin: Oh, man, and when I saw my son get old, too, Click!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: This isn't a Tron ride, this is Click!

Rachel: We have referenced Click a fair amount lately.

Griffin: Yeah. I don't really care about you watching that one.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: I've seen it.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah. I bet it hits different now that I have two kids.

Rachel: That's probably true. What if you got weirdly emotional? I bet you—

Griffin: Oh, I get super emotional.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah. But that's exploitive, I'm not going to do that.

Rachel: Another unusual configuration, apparently the Hydra the Revenge ride at Dorney Park and Wildwater Kingdom—

Griffin: Wow?

Rachel: Features two cameras. One takes a rider's picture before a loop, and the other takes a picture while the rider is upside down.

Griffin: Okay, that's kind of cool!

Rachel: It's kind of a before and after.

Griffin: I think Tron actually does do that, because Tron I think gets you at two angles as you go through like the launch tunnel.

Rachel: Yeah, well, that's on either side. That's how you can get like a good angle.

Griffin: Right, but this is a compa—an A-B comparison sort of—

Rachel: Yeah, but this is like—

Griffin: I like that.

Rachel: Here's you before, and here's you now.

Griffin: That's cool.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That's really cool.

Rachel: Yeah, but that's on-ride cameras. I think it's a...

Griffin: It's great.

Rachel: It's a really fun memento. I've never done—have you ever done the like get a key chain or a shirt or whatever?

Griffin: Yeah, yeah, at Paramount Kings Island we did that a couple times. I remember having one of those little key chains that you could like put your eye through and you could look into it and see yourself like having the time of your life on Son of the Beast or whatever.

Rachel: Oh?

Griffin: In the six months that that roller coaster was opened. My one issue, and I hate to be a downer—

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Is that I wish the photographs did not cost \$45 to buy it after you get off the ride. And I get—I can't recreate that photo on my own!

Rachel: [laughs] That's very true.

Griffin: I cannot, in my backyard!

Rachel: It really got you there.

Griffin: Go down a big hill, while Tiana and the Frog Prince are watching me and clapping and singing?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I can't do that at home! I get I'm paying a premium for that. \$45 though?

Rachel: Yeah. Yeah. I mean... that's ridiculous, and part of the reason I don't have any mementos of my ride experience are that very reason.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I can't imagine David and Linda being like, "Sure! \$45."

Griffin: Wild. But it's nice that the option is there, certainly.

Rachel: Yeah, and the posing. The people who can really lock their posing in—

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: Like, it—always a delight.

Griffin: Yeah, I love it. I do love it. It's a—it's a sport to me. It's a natural high.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Hey, if we're going to afford all of these ride pics, I ran up the total, it's going to cost us \$700,000.

Rachel: [chuckles] Oh my gosh? We don't go on that many rides?

Griffin: No, we don't go on that many rides. I shouldn't put an arbitrary goal out there like that.

Rachel: No.

Griffin: But we do have some goals this Max Fun Drive, which you can help us reach by going to maximumfun.org/join. When this episode comes out, we may have hit this one already, but at 3,000 new and upgrading and boosting members, we're going to be doing a Yellowstone Season 2 recap on the next episode of McElroy Family Clubhouse. Which I'm very, very excited for.

We got other stuff coming up, we're trying to do a six thumbs Dark Souls run at 6,000 new and upgrading members. We have some other stretch goals to sort of hopefully entice you. But for me, the two main enticing things here at the Max Fun Drive is, one, you help us make our shows, which is huge.

And truly, I do not mean that in any kind of abstract way, when I say you're supporting us—you are giving your money and picking the shows that you like that you want that money to go to. And that is—that's a pretty direct sort of way of helping out something that you—that you enjoy. And it is something that we deeply, deeply rely on to keep all of our shows sort of in the black.

Rachel: Some of you have been members for a really long time, and you've been through us—been through us. [chuckles]

Griffin: You've been right through us.

Rachel: Been with us for a lot of different changes within—

Griffin: Different shows—

Rachel: Within the McElroy—

Griffin: Even, yeah.

Rachel: Empire.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: And a lot of different new technologies that have been introduced and—

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: And your support has really made that happen year over year.

Griffin: Without you guys, we wouldn't be talking to you in the virtue spa—the virtual space right now. Virtue space sounds like some—

Rachel: We'd still be putting out our print newspaper.

Griffin: Right.

[both chuckle]

Rachel: With transcripts of our podcast.

Griffin: God, you'd be so cute with like a newsies hat and like a little ink stain nose.

Rachel: "Extra, extra! Rachel likes... this program this week. And you should like it too!"

Griffin: That's good. That's a good impre—that's a good summary of what we do here on Wonderful.

Rachel: [chuckles] I couldn't think of a show.

Griffin: We've been doing this for a long time. And the only reason we are still doing this, the only reason it is our full-time jobs and that we've been able to hire a team of people to help make these shows, the only reason we've been able to make more video stuff this year—

Rachel: Can we highlight—

Griffin: The reason it's our jobs—yeah?

Rachel: Can we highlight a particular person?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: That helps us. And not really me specifically, but the McElroys, and that is Tom.

Griffin: Tom.

Rachel: Tom is your like video guru, and he is amazing.

Griffin: He's incredible. He does great work. So does Rachel, our intrepid editor, and Sarah and Shannon and Amanda, and just like everyone that we—that we work with.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: We are able to do that because of the drive, because of this, because of you at home right now. If you go to maximumfun.org/join, you can—you can contribute to that, because it is the only reason we're able to do this. We're not going to let you just go empty handed, though, because—

Rachel: Yeah! I want to talk about—because a lot of you probably hear like, "Well, I'm not Mr. Moneybags. You know, I don't drive a fancy car."

Griffin: Mm-hm.

Rachel: The—

Griffin: What other kind of stuff do they say?

Rachel: [chuckles] "I don't have glasses that let me browse the internet."

Griffin: Yeah. That's a big one.

Rachel: And what I'm saying is that at just \$5 a month, you can access, what, thousands of hours of bonus content?

Griffin: I don't know that anyone's added it up. It's definitely many hundreds of hours of bonus content, because it's all the shows, right? You get access to all the shows, all the history of all the bonus content. I've got a list here of some of the stuff. First of all, obviously, our Mummy sort of review that we did this year. But past years, we did a Dharma & Greg watch, because we reference it so much. Rachel played Stardew Valley. Last year was a delight, we did Hockey Talk Badokadok—

Rachel: [chuckles] With Dave Shumka.

Griffin: With Dave Shumka, where we got to talk to an actual hockey player who was Dave Shumka.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Which was delightful. We had one where we interviewed Jasmine, the Canadian bachelorette.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Which was really great.

Rachel: Amazing.

Griffin: But also, I mean, if you're a MBMBaM fan, you're getting, you know, Plato's Rave, the Hot Ones audition that we did. [chuckles] Like, there's a ton of stuff in there.

Rachel: The Cousinverse this year.

Griffin: The Cousinverse is the new episode this year.

Rachel: I started listening to it, have you listened to it yet?

Griffin: I haven't listened to it. I mean, I did it, but I haven't listened to it yet. That's where Juice and Trav's kids and Henry worked together to make a one-shot RPG thing for us, for TAZ this year, which is great. All of that can be yours for just \$5 a month.

If you want to step it up, we have like other tiers. \$10 a month, you get an exclusive enamel keychain of a show of your choice. This year it's—for us, it's Big Greg Energy, sort of referencing our constant need to return to the Dharma & Greg well. But also at \$10 a month, and this is a new one, is you can get ad-free feeds of most of the—most of the shows on the network.

Rachel: Can I just say that if you have a Greg in your life—[chuckles]

Griffin: This is the perfect gift for them.

Rachel: Finally, you have the perfect gift for them.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Or if you love a Greg.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And that's a great way to show them. [titters]

Griffin: Yeah, any show that you select to support with your—with your membership, again, at maximumfun.org/join, you get access to that ad-free feed. So, there's a lot of other—there's other levels too, where you can get other great gifts, but I just want to focus on those two right now.

Because really, anything you can do to support us, it helps tremendously. Every year, there's a certain amount of kind of loss of, you know, Max Fun members, as credit cards expire or, you know, folks, you know, have a tighter time or, you know, have stopped listening to the podcast. That last one doesn't sound positive—

Rachel: I can't imagine that's true.

Griffin: Can't even imagine that. So, you know, it's—this is not a cumulative thing, it's why we kind of have to bust our humps every year.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: So, please help us out and help us reach our stretch goals and get some great bonus content and stuff over at maximumfun.org/join. Thank you so very much.

Rachel: Thank you.

Griffin: Hey, can I do my thing?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: I usually get to say like "can I steal you away," and then that's my cue to have a drink. So, I'm just going to do it now.

Rachel: I like "can I do my thing," though, because it really suggests like you're about to bust a move.

Griffin: It makes me sound like a very, very, very tired James Brown.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: A very tired, very polite...

Rachel: "Ladies and gentlemen, members of the audience, can I do my thing?" [chuckles]

Griffin: Can I do my thing? It's a weird sort of like passive thing that I don't know that James Brown would necessarily sort of channel himself. Cats.

Rachel: Cats is your thing?

Griffin: Cats.

Rachel: Hm...

Griffin: It's sweeps week, baby. This is a power play. I'm talking cats.

Rachel: Not the musical?

Griffin: Not the musical. I could talk about the musical, which is not good.

Rachel: Mm-hm...

Griffin: It's just not a good show.

Rachel: Not a good show.

Griffin: Not a good show. But the movie with Taylor Swift and Idris Elba is one of the fucking wildest motion pictures I've ever consumed.

Rachel: Yes, 100%.

Griffin: And that's saying something. I could totally talk about Cats.

Rachel: You're talking about the animal.

Griffin: I could, broadly, talk about all of god's beautiful felines. Because what I love about the many different sizes and shapes and colors and types of cats that there are out in the savanna, the jungle, the forest, what have you, all of our biomes, is no matter how big and gnarly they get, they all still kind of do the same kitty cat stuff.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That's amazing. I love that a lot. I just want to really dial in, though, about—into the domesticated house cat sort of territory.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Because I got the bug.

Rachel: Oh, yeah.

Griffin: I got the kitty cat bug. And so does—I think it's probably because Gus, who is five now, is really into pretending to be a kitty cat?

Rachel: Yeah, which feels like developmentally like appropriate.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like, that is a definite phase. Like either children wanna be an animal of some kind—

Griffin: Or a truck.

Rachel: Or yeah, or a vehicle. [chuckles]

Griffin: There's only two types of kids, trucks kids and kitty cat kids. And Gus is a kitty cat kid.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: And he loves to pretend to be a kitty cat, and it's even cuter than it sounds. And so I've just, I don't know, I've just been thinking about kitty cats a lot. And I wanted to talk about 'em, because I think they're great and we've never discussed kitty cats before.

Rachel: Okay, you're not gonna like push me up against a wall to like get a cat by the end of this episode?

Griffin: No, but if you feel so moved, one, that's a testament to my sort of power of elocution.

Rachel: Yeah. Okay, well, I guess check back in by the end of this segment.

Griffin: Well, now there's like a ton of pressure. I'm not doing this to convince you that we should have a cat. Rather, I'm here to sing a song of kitties.

Rachel: What do you have to do to get me to walk out of here today with a cat? [titters]

Griffin: Is it maybe give you some history on domesticated cats?

Rachel: Sure.

Griffin: I hope so, because I'm about—can I do—can I—

Rachel: That's why when you go buy a car, they give you the history of cars.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And that's what convinces you. [chuckles]

Griffin: Can I—can I do my thing? Humans domesticated kitty cats about 10,000 years ago, around the Fertile Crescent. And what I really like about how humans domesticated cats is that they didn't have to do a whole lot. There's a theory that cats sort of self-domesticated, because as humans in the Fertile Crescent started to like get really into agriculture and, you know, start building storage for their produce, then rodents started to kind of come around and they were like, "Hm, what's this, grain? Why are they keeping it in a big tower? That's crazy. Let's get crazy with it." And then kitty cats found out, "Hey, I heard a rumor that where that granary is, there's rats and mice like galore—"

Rachel: Yeah, yeah.

Griffin: "So, we gotta go check that out." So, it's really a little old lady who swallowed a fly situation, where we had granaries and rats wanted up in that, and then cats wanted up in the rats.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: And so, via the transitive property, cats were like, "Actually, these humans fucking rip, and we can chill. We can absolutely hang."

Rachel: Yeah. "It turns out I really like my head scratched, and humans really seem to wanna do it."

Griffin: Yeah, so like if you're wondering if the human kitty cat sort of relationship has always been sort of a long-term food transaction—

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: The answer is yes, there you—there you go.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: That process was different for dogs, from what I understand, who were less agreeable with the domestication idea. They weren't naturally like, "Oh, yeah, these guys have things we like, let's get up in there."

Rachel: Although, now there's kind of been a swap, in that I feel like people feel like a dog is a more loyal pet.

Griffin: Yeah, I don't—I mean, yeah. I'll talk about sort of the rap cats have. When I later on do a—

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Kitty cat rap.

Rachel: *Ooh?*

Griffin: I'm not doing a kitty cat rap. Current estimations put the current number of cats living in houses, otherwise known as house cats, in the United States, between 73 and 78 million. Sorry, 73 million and 78 million, not the number 70—be crazy if there were only 73 cats in the United States.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: There is approximately one in every third household.

Rachel: Oh?

Griffin: And most of the houses that have a cat in it, have multiple cats. Which—

Rachel: Interesting.

Griffin: Anecdotally feels right to me.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I don't think I've ever—I've never had more than one cat. I did have a cat and a dog growing up, and that was a—that was a lot. But most folks I know that have a kitty cat are like, "He gets so lonely. We gotta get a friend for him."

Rachel: Yeah, I think that's interesting. I definitely have seen that where people get one cat, and then suddenly they have two cats.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And it's never really clear what pushed them over the edge. I will say, for my parents, I went to college and they got a second cat. [chuckles]

Griffin: That's usually, yeah, that's a good sign that it's time. "It's the cat that's lonely, though. It's the other cat that's lonely!"

Rachel: "Yeah, we're fine." [chuckles]

Griffin: "We are fi—we—"

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: "Are good."

Rachel: "I don't even need another cat—"

Griffin: I don't.

Rachel: "But my cat *really* wants one."

Griffin: This is like, it's interesting to me that cats are just so widely adopted and usually come in packs in the household. Because I can't think of another sort of common house pet that has the reputation that cats have. Like, even for people who love their cats, like I feel like the general sentiment that people have about their cats is like, "These guys are little shits. These are—these little precocious bastards think they own the place. I love these lovable little assholes."

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Like, that kind of dichotomy of like, "I love this guy, he fuckin' sucks. [chuckles] He's so mean to me—"

Rachel: And I mean, that's—

Griffin: "But I—he's—I love this little—"

Rachel: It's just the—

Griffin: "Stinker."

Rachel: Comparison, right?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like I think if... the like, I don't know, the history of comparing cats to dogs didn't exist—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: People would recognize like a cat is an incredible pet.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: And their only joy. But everyone's always like, "Well, but if you had a dog."

Griffin: Well, that's—you're bringing, first of all, I will say, a surprising amount of baggage to this cat V dog sort of conversation.

Rachel: [chuckles] I just have always been a cat person.

Griffin: I get that.

Rachel: I've definitely had dogs in my life.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And I've had a great experience with dogs.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: But if you like, you know, held my hand to the fire—

Griffin: That's crazy, don't do that.

Rachel: [chuckles] I would say cats.

Griffin: That would hurt. Rachel. That would hurt, Rachel, so don't do it.

Rachel: Please don't.

Griffin: I would go the same way, even though they have this reputation of being like lovable, mean shitheads. What's great is that they fully earned that reputation with sort of like their whole demeanor and their behavior and everything. Starting with like... they're adorable. And also, they have these razor-sharp claws that they use not just for like defense, but for *everything*.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Like if they're doing a good stretch and they need to get some leverage, they'll use their claws to sort of get a good grip on whatever it is they're stretching on. Or to climb a surface or to, you know, spread their scent, they have glands in their paws. Or just scratching for stress relief,

just because it feels good to scratch. Their belly fur is out of control. I'm not telling you anything you don't already know, but it's also hypersensitive.

Rachel: Yeah, don't touch it.

Griffin: It's hypersensitive, which like, I guess I could have guessed, because everyone kind of knows that's a trap. It's like an evolutionary kind of defense thing of like, that's where a lot of the cat's most important stuff lives—

Rachel: Yeah, the important stuff.

Griffin: And so, it has a more sort of sensitive belly hair. And that's why, you know, there's an almost reflexive bad thing of them hurting you and scratching you if you go for their belly fur. That's just them setting a boundary. But again, it's like this guy's so cute and he's so fluffy and so pain—so painful.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: That dichotomy, to me, is the essence, is the essence of a cat.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: But they also have so much like dope social behavior that I think makes them good little companions. I think most people sort of know this fact already, but they have the glands in their cheeks.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And I think everyone probably learned about Cesar Millan around the same time, and then like—oh, no, it was Jackson Galaxy!

Rachel: It was Jackson Galaxy.

Griffin: Holy shit! I can't believe I just mixed up My Cat From Hell with Jackson Galaxy and My Dog From Heck, featuring Cesar Millan.

Rachel: Oh, gosh.

Griffin: But everyone watched Jackson Galaxy. What a fuckin' name, man!

Rachel: I would love to dip back in just to see what happened to that—

Griffin: Dude! What happened to Jackson Galaxy, host of My Cat From Hell?

Rachel: Who would bring a literal guitar case in with cat toys.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And then would suggest to every cat owner that you needed to build a like elaborate obstacle system around the walls of your house.
[chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah! He'd bust out the fuckin' Stratocaster case, spin it around a few times like he's Antonio Banderas in Once Upon a Time in Mexico.

Rachel: Get a little feather out.

Griffin: Kick it open, get a little feather out.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Get a tiny little duster out. Get a little laser pointer out of there. Anyway, they got these glands in their cheeks, and so when they rub up against you with their face, it feels ni—that's nice. It's like, this cat likes me. But also it's like saying, "You're mine now. You are my thing." And that's insulting a little bit, but also it's like them sort of showing trust and like adding you to part of their kind of smell community.

Rachel: Ah, the slow blink.

Griffin: The slow blink, we love the slow blink in this house.

Rachel: It's like, "I'm so relaxed around you."

Griffin: Yes!

Rachel: Like, "It's okay if I—"

Griffin: I don't—

Rachel: "Close my eyes." [chuckles]

Griffin: "For just a second. They're so dry." We used to have a kitty cat named Cecil back in Austin, who was an absolute lunatic. But also did like peak cat stuff all the time, he was always rubbing his face up on you every hour of the day.

Rachel: He was so big.

Griffin: He was so big! This is the thing that I really liked about Cecil, is that, you know, cats aren't—inherently are not as hardy as a dog is. But you could fuckin' play with Cecil. Like you could really—

Rachel: He was a tank.

Griffin: He was a tank. You could get him really, really revved up and going.

Rachel: And like muscular! Never seemed—

Griffin: Beefy!

Rachel: Like, oh, we've really enabled him to be like a chonk. It was like—

Griffin: No, it was—

Rachel: No, this cat is ready to go like five rounds in the ring.

Griffin: Yeah. I suspect he was like a farmhouse cat, sort of naturally just sort of built. But we didn't live in a farmhouse. And so, I like to think that when he ran away and didn't come back, he just went to a—he went farm shopping or something.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It's possible. Anyway, cats also pee and poop in a special place. And that's awesome. That's cool.

Rachel: That's—yeah. And they seem to figure that out real fast.

Griffin: Yeah. So that's like cool of them, that they do that.

Rachel: There's no like, you have to spend like a few weeks with a dog really teaching them like, hey, we don't do this here.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And a cat's like, "Oh, okay."

Griffin: Yeah. So, that's kitty cats. I think they're really good, and like of course they are, but I—we hadn't done 'em. We hadn't done kitty cats.

Rachel: We hadn't done kitty cats.

Griffin: I did a control-F search for kitty cats in our database, nothing.

Rachel: Huh.

Griffin: So, here we are, talking about kitty cats, because it's the Max Fun Drive time. And we want you to know that we're serious about this shit!

Rachel: And if you have a cat—

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: Or know a cat, love a cat, a Garfield enthusiast—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: A fan of the musical...

Griffin: The Garfield musical.

Rachel: Maybe you're ready to become a Max Fun Member.

Griffin: Maybe. Put down those pictures of Skimbleshanks the railway cat that you've got.

Rachel: How did you say that without singing it?

Griffin: [sings] Skimbleshanks the railway cat! I started too high, I can't do the next part.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: [sings] The cat!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Maximumfun.org/join is where you can go to support us and all of our shows, all the stuff that we make, and just help us keep this going. It's the only reason why it's still going and we are able to make it our whole careers and build our lives around it, is because of the drive and the support you all give.

So, if you're able to contribute to that, maximumfun.org/join. Pick the level that works for you, pick the shows you listen to, your money goes right to 'em, and you get a bunch of great bonus content and stuff. There's truly not a lot of, I don't know, media companies in existence that do what Max Fun does. I wouldn't—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I literally wouldn't want to do a show anywhere else. Just sort of knowing the practices of most of the other places, I feel so good being a part of the Max Fun network.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And it's such an honor to have been here for as long as we have. And if you've been a longtime listener but you've never chipped in, I guarantee you will not regret supporting something, not just our shows, but just sort of Max Fun in general, because it's totally worth it.

Rachel: Yeah, 100%. And you know, as a thank you, if you're all caught up on all of your Max Fun podcasts, the bonus content will really get you week to week through some of those dry spells.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Because there's so much of it.

Griffin: We're gonna be streaming a lot over the drive, in order to, you know, keep the party going. What day is this coming out? Oh, on Thursday, we're gonna be doing an office tour video. I need to clean up in here, because it's rough.

Rachel: Oh, yeah, you have totally switched things around in here.

Griffin: Yeah, I've done a lot. But we're gonna be touring all of our offices, including Dad's, which I'm curious to see.

Rachel: Oh, god...

Griffin: No, he's done like some work on it.

Rachel: What does that mean?

Griffin: Stuff's in different places.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: He still has his—

Rachel: So there's a lot of stuff!

Griffin: He still has a giant picture of himself from the cover of Huntington Quarterly Magazine, on like an easel in the middle of his room. So like if you wanna see more about that, we're gonna be streaming that. I'm doing Trial by Fieri. I did a Fuser stream earlier this week with some true jammers in it, gonna be doing it again next week. So, follow us on YouTube, The McElroy Family, and get notified on when we're doing all that stuff. But yeah, thank you all so much. I know we have a lot of listeners who've been members for a long time, and if you are able to sort of boost your donation however much you know you can, that helps us get closer to that goal too.

Rachel: Yeah, it doesn't have to be to like the \$10 level.

Griffin: Yeah, no, you can do six, whatever.

Rachel: You know? Like obviously we wouldn't expect you to double your gift, you know.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: If you're able to give more than \$5, but can't give 10, that's an option too.

Griffin: Yeah. So again, maximumfun.org/join. Please consider helping us out if you have been a listener of this show for a while, for even just five bucks a month. It really makes all the difference in the world. It makes this show possible. Do you wanna know what our friends at home are talking about?

Rachel: Yes, please.

Griffin: Sierra says, "My Small Wonder is that it is mid-April and my local state park announced that the first bison calf of the year has been born. They're sometimes referred to as red dogs, and are one of the cutest animals on the planet. Bison are incredibly important to the Great Plains ecologically and culturally, and I feel so happy they are continuing on as a species."

Rachel: Wow.

Griffin: I did see a picture of this little guy, and I think it's called a red dog because like its body definitely looks like that of a calf, but it still has that sort of big bison head, so the proportions of it make it look like it's just like a very tall Schnauzer or something.

Rachel: That sounds great, I'm gonna check that out.

Griffin: It's really great. You gotta check this guy out. CJ says, "I'm a huge Buffalo Sabres fan, and I'm so glad we're breaking our playoff drought. I'm sorry about the Blues, but you should jump on the Sabres bandwagon. We also love—" And then they list a bunch of players. Oh, wait... Yeah, they say "blue and gold FTW," so I guess that's not Blues—like they're not sharing the Blues enthusiasm that's also what the Sabres are known for. Yeah, Blues just missed it. Blues *just* missed it.

Rachel: I do love, you know, a success story, though.

Griffin: Yeah. Me too!

Rachel: You know, a team that has found its way, you know, to the top of the pack is always a fun team to follow.

Griffin: Good on ya. I don't know if we're gonna watch any playoff hockey. I'll be curious to see what happens with the Flyers/Penguins, just the sort of—

Rachel: Yeah! That dynamic.

Griffin: The Pennsylvania sort of turnpike rivalry.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That may or may not exist. But in my mind, it's really, really powerful.

Rachel: I have to assume it does.

Griffin: I have to assume it does. Thank you so much for listening! 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 again, thanks to Max Fun for having us on the network. Maximumfun.org/join, help us reach our goals, help support our shows and all that jazz. I'm not gonna get into it again. Anything else, Bae?

Rachel: No.

Griffin: All right!

Rachel: I'm happy to be here with you, my love.

Griffin: Me too!

Rachel: In our—

Griffin: It got hot!

Rachel: Studio?

Griffin: It was cold today, and it got hot in the studio making Wonderful. It might be the show lights, it might just be the chemistry.

Rachel: There's a lot of chemistry.

Griffin: How's that lemonade, by the way?

Rachel: It's really good.

Griffin: Good! It looks good.

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

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