

Sawbones 584: Matilda and Telekinesis

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Clint: Sawbones is a show about medical history, and nothing the hosts say should be taken as medical advice or opinion. It's for fun. Can't you just have fun for an hour and not try to diagnose your mystery boil? We think you've earned it. Just sit back, relax, and enjoy a moment of distraction from that weird growth. You're worth it!

["Medicines" by The Taxpayers plays]

Sydnee: Hello! And welcome to Sawbones, a marital tour of misguided medicine. I'm your host, Sydnee McElroy!

Charlie: And we're your co-hosts, Charlie.

Cooper: And Cooper McElroy.

Sydnee: All right, as you can tell, this is a different episode today, because Justin is—just—our... daddy has abandoned us. [chuckles] Justin has abandoned us.

Charlie: [sings] He disappeared.

Cooper: Where's my daddy? [chuckles]

Sydnee: [chuckles]

Charlie: He's literally just in the other room.

Sydnee: I was hoping one of you would pick that up.

Charlie: He's literally just in the other room though.

Sydnee: Yeah, he's just in the next room.

Charlie: Yeah.

Sydnee: No, we thought it would be fun—

Charlie: We kicked him out.

Sydnee: This is a special episode. I always do the research, so I gotta be here to tell you the research. But the fun stuff Charlie and Cooper are responsible for this week, because what—our episode is inspired by what?

Cooper: The show Matilda!

Sydnee: Okay, we are doing Matilda, the musical. Where, Charlie, you tell us where.

Charlie: At Heart in the Park, in Huntington, West Virginia, Huntington Area Regional Theater.

Sydnee: Okay, now Cooper gets to do show dates. Do you know the show dates, Coop?

Cooper: Yeah. So, we already did two shows, and next—

Sydnee: We have another show tonight.

Cooper: And we have another show tonight, and next week we have—

Charlie: Weekend.

Cooper: Weekend, we have three other shows.

Sydnee: The 19th through the 21st. And then the weekend after that, we have three more. What's that?

Cooper: The 26th through the... 28th.

Sydnee: Yup, you got it. And they're all at Ritter Park Amphitheater.

Cooper: Yup.

Sydnee: Now—

Cooper: In Huntington, West Virginia, don't forget that.

Sydnee: Yeah. In the show Matilda, Matilda has a psychic ability.

Cooper: Telekinetic powers, if you'll call them.

Sydnee: Yes. So, I thought it would be fun to talk about telekinesis. You guys are really going to make a lot of drink noises on the show, aren't you?

Cooper: [chuckles]

Sydnee: Cooper's drinking some Throat Coat tea to prepare her for tonight, and Charlie's just gonna shake that lemonade all over.

Charlie: Lemonade!

Sydnee: Yeah.

Cooper: Yeah, Guthrie's—

Charlie: No, but it's got those good little crunchy ice cubes.

Cooper: Guthrie's Lemonade.

Charlie: We're gonna get sidetracked so easily. [chuckles]

Sydnee: Let's try to stay on track with the show. [titters] So, we're going to talk about telekinesis. I want to tell you about the research, because here's what I think is interesting, girls. After you—

Cooper: Why are your feet so cold?

Sydnee: My feet are always cold.

Cooper: [chuckles]

Sydnee: After—I read the book Matilda when I was a kid. And after I read the book Matilda—because she is a nerdy girl who likes to read, and feels like a bit of an outcast.

Charlie: I don't think—

Sydnee: Tell 'em what—so you don't think Matilda's ner—

Charlie: I don't think she's nerdy that much.

Cooper: She's cool.

Sydnee: Well, I was a nerdy girl who liked to read and felt like an outcast. So, to me—

Charlie: I mean, yeah.

Sydnee: And I thought after I read the book, maybe if I stared at things long enough, I might be able to move 'em with my mind.

Charlie: I also did think that.

Cooper: Of course you do.

Sydnee: Did you both, after watching the musical or the movie or whatever—because you haven't read the book.

Cooper: No!

Charlie: I'm reading the book.

Cooper: No?

Sydnee: Have you ever looked at something and thought, "I'm going to do this with my mind."

Charlie: Yes.

Cooper: I mean, right after I—

Sydnee: Yes, Charlie says yes.

Charlie: Yes.

Cooper: Right after I saw that video of the guy bending the spoon and making it break somehow, I did—

Charlie: Uri Geller.

Cooper: I—yeah—

Sydnee: We're going to talk about Uri Geller—

Cooper: I did try that!

Sydnee: That's a little foreshadowing.

Cooper: I did try that, and no, I couldn't.

Sydnee: Have you ever heard the myth that humans only use 10% of their brain power? Have you ever heard that?

Charlie: Yes.

Cooper: No? Because it's a myth.

Charlie: How have you not heard that?

Sydnee: That is a myth. But I think—

Charlie: How has nobody told you that?

Sydnee: But listen, it's—I think it's pervasive for a reason—

Cooper: I have actual smart friends.

Sydnee: [titters] I think it's pervasive—

Charlie: That's fair! [laughs]

Sydnee: For a reason. I think a lot of people think that if they just pushed their brain further, they could do more with it. And not only do we think that, but girls, the US military and the CIA decided that they wanted to conduct research at one point into whether or not humans have the ability to speak to someone in their mind, to see locations they're not in remotely, or even—

Cooper: Like Eleven from Stranger Things.

Sydnee: Just like 11 from Stranger Things—or move things with their mind.

Cooper: Oh my good lord.

Sydnee: Yes. So, I want to talk about some of the research, and you can talk about how that plays out in Matilda the musical. Okay? So, listen to me for a second. Listen, and I will ask you questions in a moment, but listen. The military has been interested in this kind of like pseudoscience—do you know what pseudoscience is, girls?

Charlie: Yes.

Sydnee: What is it?

Charlie: Fake science.

Sydnee: Fake science. There you go. Pseudo meaning like...

Charlie: Unreal.

Sydnee: It's not real, yeah.

Cooper: Oh. For a second I thought pseudo meant like... like that one kind of like fighting with the—like where you—

Charlie: Are you thinking about sumo wrestling?

Cooper: Yeah.

Sydnee: Not sumo.

Charlie: [chuckles]

Charlie: [laughs]

Sydnee: Sumo science is very different.

Charlie: Yeah, that's—*kaboosh*.

Sydnee: But in the—back in the '50s and '60s, the US military got interested specifically in like using drugs on people to try and make them tell the truth, or to try and control their minds, or that kind of thing.

Cooper: Like in *Stranger Things*!

Sydnee: So, that was—

Charlie: [sings] Truth serum!

Sydnee: That was—yes, truth serum. So, that was bad. And that has all been declassified, and people were very angry about it, and people were prosecuted for it. It was a big—it was called MK Ultra, there was Project Artichoke. It was all bad stuff. But by the '70s, they decided they needed to do research that was less obviously criminal. And the cold—do you know what the Cold War was?

Charlie: Yes.

Cooper: No.

Sydnee: Charlie, can you tell us what the cold—what you know?

Charlie: Well—

Sydnee: I'm not putting you on the spot, I didn't expect you to say yes.
[chuckles]

Charlie: Well, we haven't learned about it in school, but I do know of the existence of it. Like I do know that—

Sydnee: It was not—

Charlie: That was a thing.

Sydnee: It was not a war-war.

Charlie: Yeah.

Sydnee: As in like nobody was fighting.

Charlie: Yeah.

Sydnee: But we kept thinking that the US and the Soviet Union were going to fight.

Charlie: Yeah.

Sydnee: And everybody kept making weapons and being really like secret and spy-y, and it was like a scary time.

Charlie: That's why there were like the bomb shelters in Grease 2.

Sydnee: Exactly! The bomb shelter in Grease 2! [laughs]

Charlie: We've made so many references! [laughs]

Sydnee: Yes! That's why there's the bomb shelter in Grease 2. And that in that time, everything that—

Charlie: By the way, yes, we have all sheen—seen all of the shows we are referencing.

Sydnee: Yes, they have, they have.

Cooper: They're very good!

Sydnee: So, the Soviet Union comprised of a bunch of countries, but the main thing that you would think of today is Russia.

Charlie: Mm-hm.

Sydnee: Okay?

Cooper: Mm! Mm-hm!

Sydnee: And so, think of Stranger Things.

Charlie: [unintelligible]

Sydnee: Sure. Think of Stranger Things. In Stranger Things, the Soviets are doing research and trying to figure out super-secret stuff. And the US is also doing research and trying to figure out super-secret stuff, right? That's based on real events. Now, they really didn't open a door to another dimension. That didn't happen.

Charlie: No.

Cooper: Will Byers was not kidnapped.

Sydnee: But what they were trying to do with Eleven, where she could like travel in her mind to other places without actually physically going there, we really were trying to do that.

Cooper: The only true monster in sane—Stranger Things is Will Byers' hairdresser.

Sydnee: [titters] Thank you, Cooper. So—

Cooper: With that bowl cut? Like...

Sydnee: Okay, so what we were interested in were a few things. One, what you see in Stranger Things, the idea that somebody could close their eyes and concentrate, and see a place far away from them and describe it. So, the thought is like you could use that to spy on your enemies.

Cooper: Yeah.

Sydnee: Okay?

Charlie: If I said like the line for Tron at Walt Disney was 10 minutes long—

Cooper: I mean, we have a machine that do—

Charlie: And there was a guy in a red—

Cooper: Does that.

Charlie: Shirt on the line, or something like that.

Sydnee: Right, right.

Charlie: Like I could see the place without physically being at the place. We are not in Disney. Blame my parents for that.

Sydnee: And then the other thing is, could we actually make things move with our mind like Eleven does? So, this research—

Cooper: Yes!

Sydnee: Started in the late '70s. There was a Princeton college student who tried to do an experiment to see, could we use our minds to influence the world around us. Okay? So, what he used was a random events generator. Basically, it was like a coin tossing machine. Okay?

Cooper: Hm!

Sydnee: And like, if you toss a coin—

Cooper: Mm-hm.

Sydnee: Over and over and over again—

Charlie: Yeah.

Sydnee: How often do you expect it—if you do it enough times, so you have a huge number of—a huge...

Charlie: It's about—

Sydnee: Collection of data.

Charlie: 50-50—

Sydnee: About 50-50. That's what you'd expect.

Charlie: Because there's two possible outcomes.

Sydnee: Right. What he was looking for was, if we stare at the coin and try to make it like in our mind go, "Heads, heads, heads, heads, heads," or, "Tails, tails, tails," can we influence the flip of the coin?

Cooper: I mean like, we could just keep saying it and keep doing it, and it w—it probably will go to the num—the thing we're saying. Because the chances were pretty high, but not because we made it. I mean, it's just like—

Charlie: Yeah, just like humans are truly delusional on some topics. If we try—if we did it enough times that it actually worked a couple times, we would very—

Cooper: There's a bug right there!

Charlie: Oh? We would very much—

Cooper: [cries]

Sydnee: Honey, just ignore the bug.

Charlie: We would very much believe that we had—that we had done something like that with our minds, because the human race is sort of delusional.

Sydnee: Girls, lock in!

Charlie and Cooper: Ew!

Sydnee: Thanks. Okay, so, this study from this Princeton student, so a college student, actually showed a difference.

Cooper: Really?

Sydnee: That there was a difference when you—when you just flip a coin and don't try to influence it, nothing happens. But when you flip a coin and try to influence it, they saw a difference. Okay? So this was—this was exciting to the dean of the Princeton School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, Professor Robert G. John. And he decided we need to pursue this kind of research. So they founded what was called the PEAR, P-E-A-R, laboratory.

Charlie: What does PEAR stand for?

Sydnee: I knew you were going to ask me that, and I didn't include that in the notes...

Charlie: Mother...

Cooper: It's a fruit!

Sydnee: No, it's not a fruit. I mean, it is a fruit, but Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research.

Charlie: You heard it first! A doc—

Sydnee: Princeton—

Charlie: The doctor told you, a pear is not a fruit.

Sydnee: Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research Lab was founded in 1979. And the idea was, can we pursue real research into these things, okay? So, one of the studies that they did was to see if you dro—listen to this. Do you know what billiard is? Billiards?

Charlie: Yeah. Kind of.

Sydnee: It's like pool.

Charlie: Yeah.

Sydnee: It's like pool. Pool table, like pool, shooting pool, pool sticks, pool balls. Okay.

Charlie: Yeah.

Sydnee: So they took 9,000 billiard balls, like pool balls.

Charlie: That's a lot.

Sydnee: Okay?

Cooper: Wow.

Sydnee: And they were dropping them into a series of 19 little boxes, okay?

Charlie: 19,000 you said?

Sydnee: 9,000 balls into 19 boxes.

Charlie: 9,000 into 19 boxes.

Sydnee: If they just drop them without a human thinking about it, there was a pretty predictable pattern of where they fell. And the center box got the most balls, okay? Because they would drop them from the top, they would all fall down into these boxes. The center box would get full first, and then the boxes to the left and right of the center would get less full. Then they asked a human to stand and focus, "Move the balls to the right, move the balls to the right, move the balls to the right, move the balls to the right," over and over and over again. And what they found is that there was a statistically significant difference when a human was moving the balls with their mind.

Charlie: Y'all....

Sydnee: So—

Charlie: Either we're really delusional or this is pretty dang cool.

Sydnee: So, based—and then they did—they did a couple other studies, like this is the telekinesis piece of it, but they did a couple other studies where they would like drop—like imagine this. They would take Charlie and drop her in a remote location where—

Charlie: Wait, what?

Cooper: No!

Sydnee: Yeah, no, listen to the study. We take Charlie—

Charlie: I like here.

Sydnee: We put her somewhere on Earth she's never been, and where Cooper, you've never been. And then Charlie, you stand there and look around, and just observe the things around you. Cooper, you would be sitting here at home with a pad and pen, focusing really hard on Charlie, thinking about Charlie.

Charlie: Wait, would she know where I was?

Sydnee: She would have no idea where you are or anything. But the idea is you would be sending her images with your mind of where you were. So you'd be looking at trees or buildings or people, and Cooper would be able to draw that here, even though she doesn't know where you are. And they found that they could—they could—they were kind of successful. This is what this laboratory published! That they could do that.

Charlie: Do you wanna know something really funny? Me and my friends did an experiment sort of like that, where we were in the classroom. Because it was raining outside, we couldn't have recess, so we were just all in the classroom like playing games and stuff. And me and my friend, I'm not going to say his name for like privacy issues, but let's just say K.

Sydnee: Yeah, let's not—we won't say names.

Charlie: Let's just say K. We came up with this thing where we would, one of us—so for example, I would look at a place in the room, close my eyes, and imagine taking a picture of that, and sending it to K, let's call him. And so, and then we did it a significant amount of times, like 10 times. And it actually ended up about, not more than half, but like four of the times, it—

Sydnee: Mm-hm.

Charlie: We, the other one could see what we were—what we were looking at exactly. It was pretty cool.

Sydnee: So, you were trying to do remote location.

Charlie: Yes.

Sydnee: Remote perception.

Charlie: Remote perception studies.

Sydnee: Yeah, you were doing those. And what the PEAR laboratory would say is that there is—that some people are able to do this, and it doesn't matter how far apart you are, or anything. Now, this research has been

criticized many times, so I'm not going to sit here and tell you girls that this is like absolutely definitive science. A lot of people are like, "Eh, I don't—I don't think this sounds right." Like, it hasn't been replicated. It's really important when we do science studies that we do 'em once and we go, "Hm, that's an interesting result. Let's do it over and over and over again and see if we get the same result." Because if we can't get the same result, then maybe it was just a...

Charlie: A fluke.

Sydnee: Yeah, maybe it was a fluke, exactly! So, but there was compelling enough research that the CIA was paying attention. And at the same time, there was a very famous person making a lot of waves in popular culture. And we're going to talk about spoon bending, but first, we gotta go to the Billing Department. [whispers] One of you say "let's go."

Charlie: Let's go!

[theme music plays]

[ad reads]

Sydnee: All right, we're back from the Billing Department, and Cooper, do you remember the name of the person we're about to talk about?

Cooper: Nope.

Sydnee: That's okay.

Charlie: Uri Geller.

Sydnee: And you watched a video of Uri Geller, didn't you?

Cooper: Yup.

Sydnee: Cooper, what did you see Uri Geller do in the video?

Cooper: So, I saw him... he was like on the news or somewhere. He had a spoon, and he was rubbing like the neck of it right in between the—the long like...

Charlie: The handle.

Cooper: The handle and the actual like spoon part. And he would rub it for a while. And it wasn't getting hot, so it wasn't the heat. And it would bend, and then just break off. And he believed that he was telling the spoon to bend, and it was bending because he was talking to the spoon. He was becoming one with the spoon.

Charlie: Exactly.

Sydnee: He was using his psychic powers. What sets Uri Geller apart from a lot of magicians is that magicians generally are saying like these are tricks. Like, "We're illusionists. We're doing something." This is a physical thing that exists. There's no magic happening. It's just, "We're not going to tell you how we did it, but it is a trick." Uri Geller did not—and to this day, has not come right out and said, "I don't have psychic powers. These are tricks." He says, "No, I have psychic powers."

Charlie: Yes.

Sydnee: I use my mind to do things. And in the '70s, he was really popular. He performed lots of tricks—

Charlie: Because of these studies.

Sydnee: Well, and I think we were at a moment where everybody thought—I mean, and I think you all have seen *Stranger Things*, and everybody was really excited about like moving things with their mind, and worried about what the Soviets were doing. That's all true.

Cooper: For like three days right after watching it—I'm sorry. I actually started laying—[chuckles] This is sort of embarrassing, but I was laying my stuffed animals out in a row, and I would each take turns starting with the

lightest to the heaviest, trying to move them with my mind. There was actually a VR game that I played just so I could experience that.

Sydnee: So, I don't think you're alone, Coop. I think a lot of people—and that's what—for me, Matilda was one of the first things that I read that made me think, well, I'm really smart, maybe I can move things with my mind?

Cooper: But then I finally realized I couldn't do it. [chuckles]

Sydnee: Well, so, Uri Geller says he could. Now, it's interesting, girls, because Uri Geller went on a talk show called Johnny Carson.

Charlie: Yeah.

Sydnee: And it was kind of like...

Charlie: Yeah.

Sydnee: Stephen Colbert or Jimmy Kimmel, one of those. It was the same idea.

Charlie: Like Jimmy Fallon.

Sydnee: Jimmy Fallon, yes. So, Johnny Carson predates all those guys. Johnny Carson was also a magician and a talk show host. And he worked with another magician, James Randi, who also set up the Skeptic Society. Which is basically a big group of people who are like, "Listen, if you're out there trying to claim some kind of magic, we're going to come investigate you and prove that you're up to no good. You're a con artist." So, Johnny Carson and James Randi had him come on the show to prove his psychic powers. And they set up all the props ahead of time. They didn't let him bring his own props. And when he got there, he couldn't do any of the tricks, couldn't bend a spoon, couldn't make anything work. Which should prove that he doesn't really have psychic powers, right?

Charlie: Yeah.

Sydnee: But it didn't. Because what he said was, "Well, listen, I'm feeling psychically weak today. My psychic muscle is weak. And if this was a magic trick, it would work every time. But clearly, it's not a magic trick. It's just like sometimes you're tired and you can't like run as fast or jump as high." He said it's like that.

Cooper: Okay, now, I used to have someone in my class that said... I'm just gonna, I'm not going to say the name, for privacy issues—

Sydnee: Yes, we don't say names.

Cooper: And they believed that they were a mythical creature. I'm not going to say which one.

Charlie: Oh, yeah.

Cooper: Yeah!

Charlie: I remember that.

Cooper: No, can I say the mythical creature?

Sydnee: Sure.

Cooper: A vampire. They believed they were a vampire. And they believed they had different like sort of powers. And no, they weren't budging. They like truly believed they were a vampire, no matter how much I told them, so... And she would like perform these tricks, they would work. But the times that they didn't work, she would be like, "Yeah, I think there was like garlic around me," or something like that. And I was like, "Girl..." And she would freak out anytime she even saw silver. Even though I was like, "Girl, that's for werewolves, not vampires." And she was like, "No, but still!" [chuckles] And still to this day, I really don't believe her, but she still believes herself. I'm out of school now, so...

Sydnee: Well, you never know. I mean, here's the thing. The CIA believed so much in Uri Geller's powers, that they decided they were going to study him. So, in 1973, the CIA, the Central Intelligence Agency, they're like the

US spies, their job is to like go gather information about things. Okay? They had Uri Geller come in. So this is like a government thing, this is as official as it gets, guys.

They had Uri Geller come in and do some experiments with them so they could figure out like, does this guy really have psychic powers? They put him in an electrically isolated shielded room, so that he wouldn't be able to like control anything in the room. They had him draw things like that he couldn't see, like somebody in another room is looking at something and he's trying to connect with them telepathically and draw things.

They had him trying to move things with his mind. There's all these—I'm—this is the declassified study that I'm reading right here. It was from August 4th through 11th of 1973. Here are the images of everything that they had him do. [chuckles] Do you see these pictures girls?

Cooper: Oh my.

Sydnee: And drawing things. And at the end of it all—

Cooper: The people—oh, *whoa!*

Sydnee: I don't know why he drew a picture of the devil. But at the end of it all—

Cooper: Whoa! [chuckles] Whoa.

Sydnee: Here's what they determined. "As a result of Geller's success in this experimental period, we consider that he has demonstrated his paranormal perceptual ability in a convincing and unambiguous manner." What that means is the CIA said, yeah, he's got psychic powers. [chuckles]

Charlie: Oh, CIA.

Cooper: Okay, can I talk—

Charlie: Oh, cia.

Cooper: Can I talk about some of the pictures that he drew?

Sydnee: Yeah.

Cooper: Okay. He drew grapes and a stick figure that said "devil" and it horns and a pitchfork. Okay, I believe the grape part, but like—

Charlie: It looks like there's a stick of dynamite too.

Cooper: Yeah! He drew a stick of dynamite. I'm scared for the person he was trying to read off of, because they apparently saw first, grapes? A stick of dynamite that was lit, and... and the devil! Now I'm scared! [chuckles]

Sydnee: That is interesting that that's what the other person picked. [chuckles] This led to—so initially the CIA had these studies—

Charlie: We should study the other person. [chuckles]

Sydnee: This—yeah, really. [chuckles] They moved it to the Defense Intelligence Agency and called it Stargate Project. That's what it was called at the time. And this led to—there's a bunch—like there was a movie about this, it was called Men Who Stare at Goats. Like the idea that you could stare at a goat and kill it with your mind.

Cooper: Oh, no!

Sydnee: Yeah.

Charlie: Poor goats.

Sydnee: I know. Well, I mean, all of this was like, could we use these—you gotta understand, what the government was trying to do was figure out, can we use psychic powers to wage war on our enemies? Or to find out information about our enemies.

Charlie: I love a good goat scream.

Sydnee: So, they published this—

Cooper: Especially fainting goats, like that's hilarious.

Charlie: I love those—

Cooper: *Aah!*

Sydnee: Everybody got really excited about it. Now there were later articles that were pretty critical. There was evidence that maybe, like this came out in 1978 and 1980, where they started finding evidence that perhaps Uri Geller had a little hole in the laboratory wall where he was peeking through, so that he could reproduce the drawings that the person in the other room was doing. I don't know if that's true, but that's what was alleged later on. That Geller had access to an intercom, so he could talk to the person who was doing the other drawing. And then at the end of it all, there were other—

Cooper: Or like just an air vent.

Sydnee: There were other scientists who went through it and said, "We don't think he has any psychic abilities whatsoever." And by the '90s, the CIA stopped all this research, declassified everything and was like, "Sorry about that." [chuckles] "Sorry about that." [chuckles] "Oops." In September 1995, they made everything available, so you can read about the CIA's investigations into telekinesis. And now most scientists feel like we prob— we're probably seeing some random things, some chance, some coincidence. And then probably— there's some really powerful stuff that magicians do with suggestion during their performances, that can make you feel like they're making things happen.

Charlie: Like a basic card trick, like—

Cooper: I actually learned how to do that.

Charlie: Like a sort of like, "Pick a card and I'll tell you which card it is," kind of thing.

Cooper: Yeah!

Sydnee: Here's how—can I tell you how the CIA hedged their bets? What they say now is like, "Look, maybe there was some evidence that this is real, but it was too unreliable for us to use in any real way, so we're not going to investigate it anymore." Instead of having to say, "Oops, probably Uri Geller didn't have psychic powers."

To this day though, Uri Geller still says he does. He tried—he did send a letter to Theresa May, who was the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom at one point, to tell her that he was going to use his mind powers to stop her from doing Brexit, which is when the UK left the EU. But it didn't—it didn't work. UK did Brexit.

Okay, so what I want to ask you girls now, now that we've learned the history of telekinesis and the fact that it, at this point, we don't really have strong evidence that it's real. Tell me what you... what—tell me about a telekinesis that Matilda does in the musical? So first of all, who do you play in the musical?

Charlie: I play Lavender, Matilda's best friend, or as most of you would know her, the girl with the newt.

Cooper: [chuckles]

Charlie: I find a newt, and I use that newt, which is basically like a really, really ugly lizard, I put it in—

Cooper: That lives in water.

Charlie: The Trunchbull's jug of water. So I pour it into a glass and give it to her after our phys ed class, or PE.

Sydnee: And then what does Matilda do?

Charlie: And then Matilda uses her mind to knock the glass over and sort of throw the newt onto Trunchbull.

Sydnee: So that's one magic trick we had to do for the show. Cooper, what's the big magic trick that Matil—well, first of all, who do you play in the musical?

Cooper: I play Bruce Bogtrotter, also known as the guy who eats all of the big chocolate cake.

Sydnee: Yes. Do you really eat a big chocolate cake?

Charlie: Yes.

Cooper: Yeah, it's magic.

Sydnee: Mm-hm. And then at the end of the show, what—

Cooper: At the like very end, Matilda—like so we have just like sort of on—like started like fighting against Trunchbull a little. And then we realized we—the plan backfired. And Matilda started moving a piece of chalk with her mind and writing on the chalkboard, pretending it was a ghost, to get the Trunchbull to be really scared and leave.

Sydnee: That's right. So we had—so now we have chalk floating in the air and writing on a chalkboard, right?

Cooper: Yeah.

Sydnee: And she's moving it with her mind, and we're moving it with—*hah*—don't tell.

Charlie: [whispers] Magic!

Cooper: [sings]

Sydnee: It would have been way easier if one of you kids did have psychic powers, because you don't, and so we had to figure out how to do all these magic tricks without your psychic powers. But—

Charlie: I totally do have psychic powers.

Sydnee: That's the history of telekinesis. That's why—and so—

Cooper: I can finally reach the top shelf!

Sydnee: So you can see, if they were doing these experiments in the '70s and '80s, *Matilda* was written in 1988.

Charlie: It was written in some like sul...

Sydnee: In that sort of cultural milieu.

Charlie: It was written as it w... it was—oh my gosh. It was written as... Oh my gosh! I can't talk. It was written as it was set in the late '70s to early '80s.

Sydnee: This is—this is a point of contention. It is set in the modern era.

Charlie: It is?

Sydnee: Yes.

Charlie: Since when?!

Sydnee: I don't know, you guys decided it was the '70s and we just rolled with it, because that's what character actors do.

Charlie: Well, the original book, if it was in the modern era, would have been—

Sydnee: 1988.

Charlie: Exactly! You see?

Sydnee: That's not the '70s, my love!

Charlie: *Close enough.*

Sydnee: This has been a point of contention.

Cooper: The nineteenys!

Sydnee: Anyway, the point is—

Cooper: It's the nineteenys!

Sydnee: It makes sense. People were thinking about this when Roald Dahl, who we don't like, but we do like Matilda—

Charlie: Don't love him.

Sydnee: We don't like Roald Dahl, but we do like the book Matilda and the musical Matilda. But we, at the time it was written, people were thinking about this—

Charlie: Oh, Coopers gone.

Sydnee: And Matilda has telekinesis. But as far as we know, telekinesis is not real. That is where our studies lead us. Although the PEAR research laboratory is still out there working, so maybe they'll find some evidence someday. You never know. Keep your minds open and let science lead you to the truth.

Charlie: We love pears.

Sydnee: Thank you, girls. Where can you see Matilda?

Cooper: You can see—you can see it a Heart in the Park, Huntington West—Huntington Original Theater.

Charlie: Area regional theater.

Cooper: Yeah, that's what I meant.

Sydnee: The Ritter Park, what it ca—

Cooper: And the...

Sydnee: Amp...

Cooper: Amphitheater.

Sydnee: Yup.

Cooper: And the—and the gates open at every weekend, three...

Charlie: [whispers] At 7:00.

Cooper: At 7:00.

Sydnee: Mm-hm.

Cooper: I knew that.

Sydnee: The gates open at 7:00. There's a little pre-show ahead of time with members of the community singing, and then the show starts at 8:30.

Cooper: Yeah, 8:30.

Sydnee: 8:30. I know it's late, but it's outdoor. We gotta—we're working with the sun. And Charlie, what are the dates? Do you remember?

Charlie: The 14th, 19th, 20th, 21st, and then 26th, 27th, 28th. Oh my gosh, I can't talk.

Sydnee: Of June.

Charlie: Of June!

Sydnee: All right, come see everybody and all the magic.

Charlie: Yes.

Sydnee: And the telekinesis that may or may not be happening, at Ritter Park Amphitheater.

Charlie: It is happening, mother. [chuckles] Oh, and tell everybody who you play.

Sydnee: Oh, I play a doctor. It's a big s—

Charlie: The doctor.

Sydnee: It's a big stretch—

Cooper: No! The doctor.

Charlie: The doctor.

Sydnee: It's a big stretch for me.

Charlie: Yeah.

Sydnee: I have to deliver a baby.

Charlie: Eight years of character study.

Cooper: Yeah.

Sydnee: All right, well, thank you, girls. Say thanks to our listeners.

Charlie: Gracias.

Cooper: And also, she's actually a really big role, she just doesn't know it. Because without her, Matilda wouldn't even be alive. So she's actually really—

Charlie: [unintelligible]

Cooper: Yeah.

Sydnee: We gotta thank Max Fun. Thank The Taxpayers for our theme song—

Cooper: Thank you, thank you.

Sydnee: "Medicines."

Cooper: Thank you!

Sydnee: And...

Cooper: Thank you!

Charlie: As always...

Sydnee: What do we say? I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Charlie: I'm not Justin McElroy.

Cooper: But I'm Cooper McElroy.

Charlie: And I'm also Charlie McElroy.

Sydnee: And don't drill—

Charlie: Ew!

Cooper: Drugs.

Charlie: No. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Charlie: What?

Cooper: [chuckles]

Charlie: [laughs] She still doesn't know the—[chuckles]

Sydnee: That was great! No, that's better. Don't do drugs!

Cooper: [chuckles]

Sydnee: Don't...

Charlie: Drill a hole in your head. [laughs]

["Medicines" by The Taxpayers plays]

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