

## Bonus episode #107 - Everyday adventure

### Episode description

In this episode, Andrew talks about his day exploring Seoul with his wife. He shares their experiences of finding something fun to do on a free Sunday. Andrew describes visiting a crowded restaurant, enjoying Korean rice cakes at a special cafe, and checking out outdoor reading spaces in the city. He talks about spontaneous plans, dealing with the summer heat, and the awesome surprises of big-city life. Enjoy the episode and happy English learning!

## BONUS EPISODE #107 EVERYDAY ADVENTURE



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Note: The transcript has been edited for clarity.

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**Andrew:** Hey everybody, welcome to bonus episode number 107 of the Culips English Podcast. How is it going? My name is Andrew. I am your host, and I am your English study buddy. And I'm back here for another week to help you with your English learning. If you're new to the bonus episode series, let me quickly explain what it is. In this series, I just tell you some stories from my everyday life as a Canadian guy living abroad in South Korea. And I hope that by listening to these stories, you will be able to B.I.G.B. B.I.G.B is our motto for the series, and it stands for build your fluency, increase your knowledge of the culture of English-speaking people, grow your vocabulary, and become a better communicator.

So, if those are your goals with your English studies, then you're in the right place. And I think you will enjoy this series very, very much. Before we get started with this week's story, I have a few announcements that I want to make. The first one is about our small-group conversation classes. If you are a Culips member, you are welcome to join us for our small-group conversations that we have each and every week. This week, we will be talking about digital modesty, the topic of digital modesty. And actually, I had a conversation with my co-host Anna about this in a Chatterbox episode that we released not too long ago. So, if you haven't heard that conversation yet, I'm going to put the link for that episode in the description for this episode. So, you can check that out and listen to it and you can get up to date about what digital modesty is. But essentially, digital modesty is just the idea of being very, very cautious and careful about what information we share online.

So that's the topic for this week's small group discussion class. And we have three of them happening this week. The first will be happening on Monday, June 24th at 6 p.m. Ireland time. Now, that will be hosted by our study guide writer, Alina. The second class will be happening Tuesday, June 25th at 7 p.m. Eastern time. So Eastern time is like the eastern part of North America. That class will be hosted by Indiana, our other study guide writer.

And then I will also be hosting a class that will be happening Thursday, June 27th at 8 p.m. Korean time. The classes will be happening on Zoom. And if you're a Culips member, then you can join the classes just by logging into your Culips account and finding the schedule. You'll also be able to change the schedule so you can see it displayed in your local time zone. So that's convenient for you so you don't have to do the calculation in your head. You can see what time it is in your time zone. And then you can also find the information to join the Zoom class. So, I hope many of you will be participating and many of you will join my class because I want to talk with you about this topic. I think that will be really interesting. So that's the schedule for this week, everyone. Please join us on Zoom for these small-group discussions about digital modesty.

The second announcement I want to make is about Culips membership. If you sign up and become a Culips member, you will get so many benefits and bonuses, including interactive transcripts and helpful study guides for all of our episodes. In the study guides, you will find explanations and examples of the key parts of the episode that we think that you need to know to improve your English. There's also a comprehension quiz for testing your understanding and some questions that you can use for speaking practice or for writing practice. Maybe you want to write a journal entry in response to what you've heard on Culips, something like that. You can do that with the prompts that are in the study guide. Plus, there's more. You get access to our member-only series, the Fluency Files. You can join us for the weekly small-group conversation classes as well, like I mentioned earlier. And there's more than that. The list of benefits and bonuses goes on and on and on. So, you can find all of the details and sign up and become a Culips member by visiting our website, [Culips.com](http://Culips.com), or by following the link that we'll put in the description for this episode.

Let's get started with this week's story. So, for this week, I am going to tell you about what I got up to last weekend, specifically what I got up to last Sunday. I had just a really wonderful, relaxing, and adventurous day. You may be wondering how a day can be both relaxing and adventurous at the same time, but it was. And I'll explain how it was in just a

moment. But yeah, my wife and I, we had this just fantastic day on Sunday, and so I thought I would share with you what we got up to. And I'll start by asking you a question. That is, how do you decide what you're going to do in your free time? How do you decide what you're going to do in your free time? Yeah. For my wife and I, usually we get to spend one day together. Our Monday to Friday is usually pretty busy, and it's **jam-packed** with work and some other stuff that we have going on. And then usually one day of my weekend, I will spend doing Culips, making the bonus episode, and preparing this episode. And then one day a week, usually Sunday, is our free day, and we get to go out and do something exciting, maybe go on a date or an adventure, something like that together.

And so usually what we start asking each other around Thursday or Friday is like, "What should we do on Sunday? What do you want to do on Sunday?" And I don't know. You know, Seoul, where we live, is a very big city, and obviously it's a mega city in the world. So, there are so many different places to explore. There's always things happening, different cultural events, different concerts, different just everything that you can imagine, different restaurants, different cafes, pop-up stores. This is going on. That is going on. So, there's always something to do, but still, sometimes it's difficult to answer that question, "What do you want to do?" And so, when my wife and I asked each other that question, "What should we do this upcoming Sunday?" We had a little bit of difficulty. We were like, "Hmm. What should we do exactly?" It's really easy to find yourself stuck in the same routine, right? You go to the same neighborhoods, to the same cafes, the same restaurants, the same shops, and the same parks, and you can do things over and over and over again, which can be nice sometimes, but other times it's nice to keep things fresh and keep things new.

So, what I've been trying to do is kind of make a mental list when I hear about something exciting happening or see about something exciting happening, then I make a little mental note like, "Oh, that would be cool to check out," or "That would be good to do." And one of the things that I noticed that I thought could be cool to do is that the library here in Seoul is

hosting these outdoor reading events. I don't know if they're like reading events **per se**, because there's not really any activity involved, but what they've done is set up different reading areas in different places around downtown Seoul. And the idea is that you can go and hang out and lounge in one of these cool outside spaces and just hang out and do some reading. And so, I made a little mental note when I saw that. I think I noticed it on Instagram, perhaps, maybe. And I thought, "Hey, that would be cool to check out." So, when my wife and I were discussing, "Hey, what should we do on the weekend?" Then I **threw that out to her**. I was like, "Oh, why don't we go to City Hall?" Because that's where one of the big reading spaces is.

The way that the Seoul City Hall is set up is that there's the City Hall building, and then in front of City Hall, there's this big square. And sometimes in the winter, they have an ice-skating rink set out in front of City Hall. And I've talked about that on Culips before. And in the summer, it's just a big field, and they have different cultural activities. But right now, it's set up with these outdoor sofas, like these inflatable, not really inflatable, like beanbag sofas that are all set up outside. And there's little coffee tables there, and there are books set up. And the idea is just to promote reading in the city, I suppose. So, I thought, "Hey, that could be cool to check out." I threw out the idea there to my wife, and she said, "Yeah, let's do it." So, we decided to go and check out the reading space in front of Seoul City Hall. And actually, in the old City Hall building, there is a branch of the Seoul Library as well. So, it's kind of connected with the Seoul Library. So that's what we decided to do for our date day last week.

And so, we headed downtown to Seoul. We rode the subway down there, and we had lunch first. There was a restaurant that my wife wanted to check out. And when we went there, this happens often in Seoul, people listening from Seoul will probably be able to connect with me on some level here and empathize with this statement. But we went to the restaurant, and it was just a beautiful, bright, very hot, sunny day. But there were so many people out and about downtown that when we went to the restaurant, there was a huge line to get in. And I'm one of those guys that can't really wait too long to go into a

restaurant. I was pretty hungry at that point, and I said, "I can wait like 15 minutes. But if it's going to be 30 minutes, 45 minutes, an hour, I don't have the patience just to wait in line to eat lunch." So, my wife was on the same page as me, and she said, "OK, we'll come back to this restaurant" that she wanted to go to another day. Because, yeah, I just, I can't do it. I can't wait that long to get into a restaurant.

So, we just went to a different restaurant that was in the neighborhood, **in the vicinity** of the one that she originally wanted to go to. We had a quick lunch, and then we went to a cafe. And at the cafe, it was really cool. It was a cafe that my wife had visited before, so she wanted to take me to show me this cafe. Because it was a Korean rice-cake cafe. And that kind of rice cake is called tteok, which is a little bit hard for me to pronounce. But tteok is the Korean word for rice cake. And I have to be honest with you guys, I don't know if you have ever tried Korean rice cake, but it's very chewy. It's like a heavy, chewy food. And there's not a whole lot of flavor, at least to my Western palate. When I first arrived in Korea, I remember the first time that I tried rice cake, and I thought, "Hmm, I don't know what I think about this." It wasn't disgusting or anything, but I didn't think it was delicious at the same time. I felt like it was just a neutral food that had no real special flavor, and it was just heavy and chewy. And I didn't really understand its appeal. Well, **flash forward** over a decade, now I've been in Korea for a long time, and I absolutely love tteok. I think it's delicious. I understand it now. **Something clicked** and I was excited to go to the cafe.

And they had many different kinds of tteok there that you could buy individually. They came in these pretty little rice-cake balls, and there were different combinations. Inside the rice cake was sometimes fruit and sometimes bean. That is a common filling that is stuffed inside of rice cake here is kind of sweet bean filling called pat. And yeah, we chose two different kinds of rice cake because A) we had just had lunch, so we weren't super hungry. B) they were quite expensive for one little rice cake. It was a little bit expensive. And C) we also ordered a Korean summertime favorite dessert called pat-bingsu, which is... bingsu is like ice flakes, I suppose. Ice flakes. And pat is the red bean, sweet red bean that I told you about before. So, we had ordered one of those as well, and we had a nice little coffee



time. I believe the rice cake flavors that we ordered were fig and... I can't remember. Ah! Ssuk. Ssuk. Which... what is Ssuk in English? I think it's called mugwort in English. I think it grows wild. I'm not an expert about this. Obviously, you can hear in my voice. But I believe it is a plant that grows, like, in the forest. It's not really farmed. I think it's a wild herb, almost. And it's got a very mellow taste. It's not a super strong taste, but it's just very mellow. I think that is the word that I could use to describe it. And again, that's like a Korean flavor that I didn't really know about or understand when I first came to this country. And now I'm like, I think I was the one that ordered that flavor because I thought that sounded the best out of all the different options. It's not as sweet, you know, like a fruit flavor can be quite sweet. There was strawberry and some different kinds of berry ones, and those seemed too sweet to me. So, I went with the mugwort.

And it was really interesting the way that the rice cake came out and was served to us. It's like a round little ball, right? And they gave us this little envelope of string. It looked almost like dental floss. And the idea is because Korea is a country where almost everybody shares their food. If you go to a cafe with your friend and you order a piece of cake, it would be really, really strange for just one friend to eat the cake and not offer to share with the other friend. Korea is a really communal country in that way. And people share the food that they order. And so, these rice-cake balls are supposed to be shared because it would be weird just not to share them with each other. And I think many customers at the cafe would mix and match and order many different flavors. And then the problem is, how do you like, share this rice ball if you use it's very pretty. And I'll upload some photos to our Instagram or if you're watching on YouTube, I'll put some visuals behind me so you can see what they look like. They're very delicate, very beautiful rice-cake balls. But if you were to just cut into them with a knife and fork, then they'd get squished, and they wouldn't be beautiful anymore. And the whole visual aspect of the presentation would just be wasted. So, what they do is they give you this like dental floss string. And I was a little bit confused, like, is this for after we eat them? Are we supposed to floss our teeth afterwards? But what you do is you wrap the string around the rice cake ball, and then you pull, and it cuts it perfectly in half without **ruining the integrity of the shape**. So, it still

maintains its beautiful form. So, I thought that was a cool experience. And I enjoyed hanging out at that cafe for a little while.

As I said, that day was so, so hot. In fact, this whole last week in Korea has just been insanely hot. Every day has been into the... I don't know, I think the other day was 34 degrees. I heard in some places it was 35 degrees. So really hot. Thankfully, in my opinion, it's not too humid yet here in Seoul. So, I can deal with heat, but the humidity is the real killer for me. But it hasn't been too too humid. But it was a really hot day that day that we were out and about downtown. So just to hang out in the cafe to enjoy a nice Korean-style dessert. And this cafe had a nice window where we could look out and out the windows and just look at the city. So, it was cool place to hang out for a bit. But that wasn't our main goal. Our main goal was to check out City Hall and to do some reading. So, we walked over to City Hall when we are finished at the cafe, and we found where the reading area was set up. And there were many, many, many of these beanbag sofas set up all through the square in front of City Hall. But there were no people there or very, very few people. There were some, but not very many at all. Just like **a handful** of people there. And can you guess the reason why there weren't so many people there? It goes back to the weather, like I just said, it was so hot that day in the 30s at least. And the sun was **beating down** just like right down on top of us.

And so, I wanted to like, at least give it a try. So, I sat down on one of the sofas, but even just sitting down on it was really hot because the fabric that the sofa was made out of was like kind of a plastic, like almost like a tarp, vinyl tarp kind of material. You can imagine that it has to be waterproof, right? In case it rains. So that kind of plasticky material gets really, really hot in the sun. And so even just sitting down on the sofa was not very pleasant because it's like, you know, if you've ever sat on a leather sofa in the hot weather and the leather gets hot and then you try and stand up and your skin kind of sticks to the sofa, it was that kind of feeling. So, I did sit down and read a couple of pages and my wife tried as well. But she was like, "This is not going to work. It's way too hot. We got to get out of the sun. We're going to die out here." So, we thought, "OK, let's go into the old City Hall



building and we'll check out the library." I thought the library would be closed because we were there on a Sunday, but the library was open, and we went inside to check out the library.

Interestingly enough, I had never been to that branch of the library. And when I was walking up the stairs to get into the old City Hall building, suddenly I got excited because not too long ago, a few months ago now, I suppose, but not too, too long ago, I visited Melbourne. And when I was in Melbourne, I went to the Melbourne Library, and it was just an amazing experience. It was one of the most fantastic libraries I've ever been to in my life. So beautiful and so cool. Just an **all-round** amazing experience, which I've talked about on Culips before. So, if you want to hear me talk about that in more detail, you can go check out that old episode. But I had that same kind of vibe while I was walking up the stairs to go inside the Seoul Library in City Hall. However, once I got inside, I was a little bit disappointed. I mean, I guess I'm comparing it to one of the best libraries in the whole world. So that's unfair of me, but it wasn't as spectacular as I thought maybe it would be. So, I was a little bit disappointed with the Seoul Library to tell you the truth. But I did go to the magazine section, and I was really impressed with the magazines. I thought, "Oh, I have to come back here to this library again to check out the magazines in the future."

Because it was so hot outside, my wife and I hung out in the magazine section, and they had like really cool magazines that I have never seen in Korea before. Magazines about cinema and architecture and art and photography, these like niche topics, not like the kind of magazine that you would just see maybe for sale in a convenience store or something like that, right? And so, I had a blast just flipping through the magazines in the library, especially there were some really cool architecture magazines. And, you know, my wife and I, listeners of Culips will know that we bought an old house and renovated our old house about a year ago now. And so, we went through this process of designing our home. And so that got me a little bit interested in home design and architecture. And there were some really, really beautiful houses on display in this one magazine I was reading.

So that was a win for me. That was a plus. But after a little while, my wife said, "We got to leave the library now." She wasn't as interested in the magazines perhaps as I was.

So, we went out into the main City Hall lobby area. And we noticed that on the fifth floor of the building, it said something like the Skywalk, like the City Hall Skywalk. It was called something like that. I may be incorrect with the name, but it was something similar to Skywalk. So, we said, "Hey, why don't we go check that out?" So, we walked up the stairs to get to the fifth floor. And we were so pleasantly surprised that you could just walk out onto the rooftop of City Hall, and it was completely open to the public. And there was like practically nobody up there. I think not very many people know that you can do this. And in fact, I had no idea that you could do this. But it's like this beautifully landscaped garden up on the top of City Hall. And there's a beautiful view, like 360-degree view of downtown Seoul. And you can see the Blue House and the old palace. You can see Seoul Tower, one of the landmarks of Seoul. That's on Namsan, one of the landmarks of Seoul. Another landmark of Seoul. So that was really cool, the view. So, we walked around on the rooftop.

But at this point of the day, my wife was starting to get that look like I'm exhausted. You know when you look at somebody and it's just like, it's so hot outside, and we've been walking around for a while. And I just looked at her and I was like, "You're getting pretty tired, right? Like, do we need to go home?" But she didn't really want to go home. But at the same time, it was tough to walk around in the heat. So, as we were just looking at the view from the rooftop, we noticed that there was this... I don't know how to explain it in English. But let me try my best to. There are these areas in Korea that are like platforms, almost like decks. They're about, I don't know, less than half a meter off the ground, maybe like 50, 40, 50 centimeters off the ground. And they're, they're quite big. They're like, several meters long, and they're made for sitting on. So, Korea has this like long history of floor sitting culture, I think, and many Korean people like sitting on the floor. And so, they have these kind of platforms, almost like a deck that you can sit on outside. And maybe you could have a picnic up there, or you could take a nap on one. I personally love them. I think they're really amazing.

And so, we noticed one of these, like, I'll just call them decks, OK, these deck tables. It's like a sitting table, it's like a platform that you can sit on. So, we noticed one of these up there on the fifth floor of the City Hall building, and it was covered with an umbrella, and there was a lot of shade on the platform. And so, we took off our shoes, because you must take off your shoes when you go up on one of these so that it can stay nice and clean. We took off our shoes and we just sat in the shade on the platform. And then we both lied down and next thing you know, it... like 30 minutes passed and I woke up because I completely fell asleep. It was so relaxing and quiet and calm there on the rooftop of the building. And my wife, I think also took a nap. And so, yeah, 20, 30 minutes later, we woke up and we were both like, "Whoa, how long did we sleep?" Like, "What time is it?" And we woke up and that look of exhaustion in my wife's face was totally gone. She's like, "Oh, that power nap did it! I'm feeling good again."

And so, we decided to keep going on our adventure. So, we exited from City Hall and as we were walking out of City Hall, we noticed that that reading area in front of City Hall wasn't the only place the library had set up. There were other areas around the city that were set up with chairs and facilities for doing some outside reading. And so, we noticed that one was pretty close to the Cheonggyecheon, which... The Cheonggyecheon is this stream that runs through the center of downtown Seoul and it's really great. As far as I know, back in the day, it used to be a highway that ran through the city, but maybe in like the early 2000s, and I'm not sure about my dates here, so Korean listeners, please correct me if I'm wrong, but around the early 2000s, the highway was destroyed, and they renovated the area by taking this old stream. I guess historically it was a stream that had run through the center of Seoul, but they renovated it and refreshed it. And now it's like a landmark in the city. It's a place where many people go to have a stroll and to just like when you're in it, it's kind of lower than street level. So, when you're walking along the stream, you don't really feel like you're in the big city and it's just a wonderful, beautiful area. I'll put some pictures on the Instagram and on the YouTube so you guys can see, because I don't think my words are doing it justice.

So, we noticed that there was a reading area set up there as well. And to walk to the Cheonggyecheon from the City Hall is not very far. It's only like a 10-minute or less walk. So, we walked over there, and we noticed that they had all of these little chairs set up and reading areas set up. And best of all, they were set up so that you could sit right beside the stream, and you could actually **dunk your feet** in the stream and just enjoy the cool water of the stream while reading your book at the same time. And there were like umbrellas set up to block you from the **stream**\*. And some people were sitting under one of the bridges that crosses over the stream to get some shade. And anyways, by this time in the afternoon, it was getting close to like 4:30-5:00. So, although it was still hot, the sun wasn't as strong. So, we were like, "This is perfect! This is much better than the City Hall place." And so, they had these, they didn't have the sofas, the beanbag sofas, like in front of City Hall. They just had these chair backs, essentially, that were made out of Styrofoam. So, you could sit on one of these chairs, you just put it on the floor. The chair had no legs, but the way that the Cheonggyecheon is set up is it's tiered. So, you can just think of like a stadium where you would watch sports and they have different tiers where you can sit, right? Almost like gigantic steps. And so, the shore of the stream is tiered, and we put our chair back on the lowest tier. And so that means that we could sit on one of the steps and then put our feet in the water.

And we must've hung out there for over an hour. We both brought our books with us, and I finished up reading "The Three-Body Problem." I think I mentioned watching the Netflix series. And after I finished watching the Netflix series, I wanted to read the book. So, I ran out and I grabbed the book. Finally, I finished the book. I have to say my review, now that I've read both the book and seen the TV show, the book is better, as always. Why is it always the case? It's almost always the case that the book is better, right? Than the movie or than the TV show. But yeah, anyways, I read my book there and just enjoyed a lovely afternoon in the sun with my feet in the water, staying cool that way. And my wife was reading her book too. I actually have no idea what book she was reading, but I'm sure it was a good one. So, it was just a great way to spend the afternoon and stay cool at the same time and do some reading at the same time.

And if you live in Seoul or you're planning to visit Seoul sometime in the future, then I highly recommend bringing a book with you and checking out one of these reading zones that you can find in front of City Hall or by the Cheonggyecheon or there are some other ones as well throughout Seoul, because I think it's just a cool initiative to encourage people to spend some time outside and to do some reading as well.

So, everyone, I think that will bring me to the end of this week's story, all about my special date day with my beautiful wife on Sunday, doing some reading outside. Because you've made it to the end of this episode, I should give you this week's completion code. So, let's make the completion code for this episode: "Outside." Outside, O-U-T-S-I-D-E. So, if you leave a comment with the word "Outside" or an example sentence using the word "Outside" on one of our social media areas, like on Instagram or Discord or on YouTube, then I will know, and you will signal to other Culips listeners as well that you made it to the end of this episode.

So, everyone, please take care this week. If you have any questions or comments about this episode, let me know. You can contact me on our Discord server, and we'll leave a link in the description for this episode so you can easily join our Discord server. If you haven't joined us there yet, what are you waiting for? Come on over to our Discord. It's an awesome place. I hang out there every day and many members of our community do as well. So, it's just a really cool place where you can hang out with other Culips listeners, practice your English, and make some new friends as well. So come on over and join us on the Discord.

OK, everybody, that's it for me for this week. Please take care. Happy English studying up ahead. And I hope to see you in our small-group conversation class this week. But if I don't, then I'll talk to you on the next Culips episode. Until then, bye-bye.

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## Glossary

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1. **Jam-packed** means completely full or crowded. In this episode, Andrew used it to describe his busy weekday schedule. *Example sentence: The train was jam-packed during rush hour, making it hard to find a seat.*
2. **Per se** means by itself or intrinsically. In this episode, Andrew used it to clarify that the reading events weren't exactly events with activities. *Example sentence: The food isn't spicy per se, but it does have a lot of flavor.*
3. **Threw that out to her** means suggested or proposed to her. In this episode, Andrew used it to describe suggesting the idea of visiting the reading space to his wife. *Example sentence: I threw that out to him, and he seemed interested in the idea.*
4. **In the vicinity** means in the nearby area. In this episode, Andrew used it to describe finding another restaurant close to the one they originally wanted to visit. *Example sentence: There are several good schools in the vicinity of our new house.*
5. **Flash forward** means to move forward in time quickly. In this episode, Andrew used it to describe moving from his first experience with rice cakes to his current enjoyment of them. *Example sentence: Flash forward to ten years later, and she's now a successful author.*
6. **Something clicked** means suddenly understood or made sense. In this episode, Andrew used it to describe the moment he began to enjoy rice cakes. *Example sentence: I had been struggling with the math problem for hours, but then something clicked and I finally understood it.*
7. **Ruining the integrity of the shape** means damaging or spoiling the original form. In this episode, Andrew used it to describe how cutting the rice cakes with a knife would spoil their shape. *Example sentence: Cutting the cake with a blunt knife risks ruining the integrity of the shape.*
8. **A handful of** means a small number of something. In this episode, Andrew used it to describe the few people at the reading area. *Example sentence: Only a handful of students attended the extra class.*
9. **Beating down** means shining intensely and strongly. In this episode, Andrew used it to describe the strong sun. *Example sentence: The sun was beating down on us during our hike, making it very hot.*
10. **All-round** means overall or in every way. In this episode, Andrew used it to describe the amazing experience at the Melbourne library. *Example sentence: The new park is an all-round great place for families to visit.*



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11. **Dunk your feet** means to put your feet into water. In this episode, Andrew used it to describe putting their feet in the stream. *Example sentence: After the long walk, I wanted to dunk my feet in the cool river.*
12. **The stream\*** Andrew misspoke and meant to say the umbrellas provided shade from the sun, but accidentally said “stream” instead of “sun”

## Episode credits

Host and preparation: Andrew Bates

Operations: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima