GROWIN' UP – EP 218 – AMUSEMENT PARK DESIGNERS

LINGOKIDS SOUND

SFX: People screaming gleefully on a passing roller coaster.

EMILY
(cold open question) Do <u>you</u> know what amusement park has the most rides in the whole world?! We'll find out today, as we check out the thrill-filled job of amusement park designers!

ORIGINAL MUSIC: [INSTRUMENTAL]

EMILY
Hey there! Welcome to Growin' Up with Emily, a LingoKids podcast that helps kids discover <u>how</u> to be... whatever they <u>want</u> to be!

COLD OPEN

SFX: Lab ambiance: computers beeping, beakers bubbling, etc.

WINSTON
Almost got it... Last one, andddd–

SFX: Door opens. The door knocks Winston's stack of dominoes, which tumble one after another in a... domino effect.

WINSTON
–OH NO! My dominoes!

SFX: Dominoes continue for a minute and then stop; Winston sighs.

EMILY
Oops. Sorry, Winston. I didn't know you were doing... whatever it is you were doing with all these dominoes.

WINSTON
(bit downcast) It's fine. Don't worry about it, Emily.

EMILY
What <u>were</u> you doing, anyway?

WINSTON
I was making a pretend amusement park! Well, a model of one...

EMILY
You were? How so?

EMILY
(giggles) I could actually imagine you having a lot of fun as an amusement park designer.

WINSTON
A amusement park designer? Do they get to build super fast roller coasters with lots of twists and turns and loop-de-loops?!

EMILY
Yep, but they do even more than that. amusement parks are way more than just roller coasters after all.

WINSTON
Really? What else do they do, Emily?

EMILY
All kinds of things! Some amusement park designers do think up the roller coasters. But others map out where the shops and restaurants go, or how the plants will be designed. (then) For example, say you and I want to create a amusement park—

WINSTON
Winstonland! That's what I was gonna call it!

EMILY
(giggles) Okay, sure. Say we wanted to create a amusement park called "Winstonland"... Where do you think we should start?

WINSTON
(super confident) With the roller coasters, of course!

EMILY
Not necessarily. Think about the little theme park model you were building. First, you need some land to build the park on, right?

WINSTON
Oh, well yeah, of course.

EMILY
And you want to make sure there's enough land for all the
rides and shops and attractions you want! Let's pretend these
little sticky notes are shops. Where would we place them in
your park?

WINSTON
Ohh! Here... here... aaaand here!

SFX: Sticky notes being placed; paper rustling.

EMILY
Okay, great! What else do you need for your park?

WINSTON
Umm... food stands! And places to sit and eat! I'll put them
all in the middle here, so you can get to them quick if you're
hungry.

EMILY
That's a good idea! And definitely something park designers
would want to plan ahead for and include.

EMILY
What else?

WINSTON
Umm... maybe what the park looks like?

EMILY
Sure! That's definitely something park designers can do,
figure out if you want to have a specific look or theme for
your park.

WINSTON
Is that what a theme park is, Emily?

EMILY
Actually, yes! Good catch! A theme park is an amusement park
that has an overall theme or look:

WINSTON

Like Jurassic Park! Or King Kong!

WINSTON

How amazing would it be to be a part of the team that puts
such fun-filled places together?! Going to work everyday
would be like... well, like going to an amusement park! It'd
be so fun!

EMILY

You would, it's true! But it takes a lot of people to build
an amusement park and keep it running properly... and a lot of
designers to make sure it all goes to plan, too!

WINSTON

Why wouldn't it go to plan, Emily? Throw some fun rides
together, make sure people have popcorn and snacks... What
could go wrong? It sounds like a good time to me!

EMILY

Well, I'll tell you a story about a time when things didn't go
according to plan... Picture this: You're in the middle of a
blistering summer in California in 1955. You're outside of a
brand-new amusement park that's about to have its grand
opening, with thousands of excited guests! The gates open and
the crowd rushes in! They can't wait to see what's in store
for them.

WINSTON

Okay, pretty exciting! What happens next?!

EMILY

Then... as you enter the park and walk along the beautiful
entryway, you realize your feet are getting stuck to the
ground!

WINSTON

What?! Whadda you mean? Like quicksand?!

EMILY

Not quite! But so sticky that you try to pick up your feet
and it goes [slurp-slurp]! You try to move and it's like your
shoes are in icky bubble gum that someone spit out!

WINSTON

Ew! Icky indeed! Now this sounds like a nightmare, Emily!

EMILY

And it's actually the story of the opening day of...
Disneyland.

WINSTON

What?! That happened at Disneyland?! Really?!

EMILY

Really! Disneyland was the first park Walt Disney opened, and
the park designers didn't know what to expect. They invited
too many people, so the park was overcrowded... The pavement
on the walkways didn't have time to dry, so the sun turned it
all goopy.

WINSTON

Ohh! That's why peoples' shoes were getting glued to the
ground!

EMILY

Yep! And the water fountains weren't hooked up yet, so many
guests got terribly thirsty in the summer heat.

WINSTON

That's crazy! So many things went wrong!

EMILY

Exactly! But even though Disneyland's opening had a rocky
start, visitors cleaned off their shoes and had a great time
strolling down Main Street and riding the Jungle Cruise. And
now the Disney park design team - who they call "Imagineers" -
learned from past mistakes and built amazing parks all over
the world!

WINSTON

"Imagineers"? That's a cool word. It's like "imagination"
plus "engineers" put together!

EMILY

That's right. (then) Actually... Why don't we get an up close
and personal look at the job of amusement park designers,

Winston?

EMILY
Close your eyes for me.

WINSTON
Uh-oh! Okay, <u>now</u> I'm excited! Let's go, Emily!

SFX: Emily snaps; Warbly transition sound.

PART ONE: CEDAR POINT AMUSEMENT PARK

SFX: park ambiance: busy crowds, people on roller coasters in the distance, arcade machines dinging, etc.

WINSTON
No. WAY. This is amazing! Where are we?!

EMILY
This is Cedar Point, Winston, in Sandusky, Ohio. It's widely considered to be one of the greatest amusement parks in the world! It has some of the world's tallest and fastest rides!

SFX: A roller coaster takes a loop nearby, passengers scream.

WINSTON
WHOH! The loops on that roller coaster! There are, one… two… three in a row! I'd get so dizzy! (then) Let's get to riding!

EMILY
Whoh, whoh! Not so fast, Winston. We'll definitely go on a ride or two, but I brought you here to talk about the job...

WINSTON
The job of an amusement park designer. Right! As long as we get a few good rides in! Maybe even a roller coaster!

EMILY
I promise we will! (then) Speaking of roller coasters, did you know that the idea for roller coasters actually came out of rides made in Russia over 300 years ago? But technically they weren't <u>roller</u> coasters at all, because they had no <u>wheels</u>.

WINSTON
No wheels? What do you mean? Was it like a boat ride?

EMILY
Close! Because it gets so cold in Russia, someone - maybe
some of the earliest known park designers! - came up with the
idea of covering pieces of lumber that were nailed together
with thick sheets of ice, so that they could slide down icy
hills on them!

WINSTON
Oh! Like sleds in the wintertime!

EMILY
Yep; only these sleds sometimes had steep drops of 50 to 80
feet! That's the height of three giraffes standing on each
other's shoulders!

WINSTON
WHOH! That's a big drop for a sled, Emily!

EMILY
(giggles) I agree! But apparently it was such a marvel that
Catherine the Great, Empress of Russia at the time, had the
designers build a few of them at her palace!

WINSTON
(laughs) That's awesome!

EMILY
Okay. So we're here at one of the most famous amusement parks
in the world: what's the first thing you notice?

SFX: Many arcade game machines beeping, pinging.

WINSTON
A Ferris wheel! I bet the people can see a lot from way up
top!

EMILY
Park designers put in slower rides, like Ferris wheels or
merry-go-rounds, so that younger kids can have fun, too.
Because some of the biggest rides - like the roller coasters -
have strict height requirements.

WINSTON
Oh yeah! The signs for some of the big rides say, "Must be this tall to ride," and then you have to stand next to a ruler to see if you measure up. Why do park designers do that, Emily?

EMILY
It's mainly for safety reasons. Each ride is designed to fit certain heights, to make sure that all the seatbelts and safety bars fit people properly.

WINSTON
WHOH! That's the Valravn roller coaster! I heard it broke tons of records when it was invented in 2016. It had the tallest hill that you drop down, at 214 feet (65 meters)! Let's do it!

EMILY
(giggles) Alright, I knew you'd be down to try it out!

SFX: Warbly transitional sound; roller coaster starts climbing: click-click-click!

WINSTON
Here we go, Emily! The roller coaster's climbing up, up, UP!

EMILY
Check out the way the wheels latch on to the sides of the steel tracks, to make sure the roller coaster stays on safely! A team of amusement park designers from Switzerland - whose specialities are in math and physics - created this awesome coaster!

WINSTON
What do math and physics have to do with it, Emily?

EMILY
The designers used math and physics to make sure all the twists and turns operate correctly, and that they're safe for everyone who rides! (then) Hold on, here comes the first big drop!

SFX: Roller coasters idles at the top for a moment.

WINSTON
HERE WE GO!!!

SFX: The cars rockets down the track.

WINSTON & EMILY
(cheering/screaming)

WINSTON
(over coaster noise) This is awesome! WOOHOO!

EMILY
Here's our first loop, Winston!

SFX: Coaster takes the loop; they scream gleefully.

WINSTON
WHOH! That was so cool!

EMILY
(excited) That was exhilarating! It's crazy to think about
all the work that went into designing and building such a
massive ride that's so much fun!

WINSTON
It sure is! I could go on that ride all day! But I need to
sit down for a minute, Emily. Oh, hey! Let's rest by that
pier near the beach! There're so many colorful flags and fun
places to take photos!

SFX: Music playing at boardwalk; people laughing; etc.

EMILY
Let's have a sit! (then) So while some park designers used
math and physics to create that amazing roller coaster back
there; others - who have more artistic skills - designed this
bright and inviting boardwalk! They chose the flowers to
plant, the pictures to go on the front of that funhouse - like
the smiling clown! - and everything else. Does that make
sense?

WINSTON

Yeah! The designers really did a good job making us feel like we're in a totally different place, even though we just walked a few feet away! Making one place feel like soo many different ones

EMILY
That's true! They're really like storytellers! The designers' goal is to make you feel like you've traveled to a new and exciting place. It's all part of the amusement park illusion.

WINSTON
Kinda like the time I went to Universal Studios! I rode the Jaws ride, where you're in a boat and it looks like you're near a little town, even though the town's fake. And a shark jumped out of the water at us! It all felt so real! I was like, "AHHHH!!!"

EMILY
(giggles) I bet! It took a team of designers to build that ride, and others to create the fake seaside town that made it feel like you were transported to a totally new place. Pretty cool, huh?

WINSTON
It really is!

EMILY
(giggles)So what else do you think amusement park designers have to do for their jobs?

WINSTON
Hmmm... so some of them design roller coasters and rides... And some of them work on how safe all the rides are too, right?

EMILY
Yep, that's one thing they do: make sure all of the rides, attractions. Designers also have to think about including quiet areas for mothers with babies, ramps so people with wheelchairs or crutches to get around easily, and first aid stations, in case anyone needs a bandage or gets queasy on a ride.

WINSTON
That's a lot of stuff to think about! I'd have to draw a map
to make sure I remembered to add everything!

EMILY
And some designers do that, Winston, the ones who are good
drawers or illustrators. They use computer programs to lay
out the whole park and all its comforts.

WINSTON
Drawing ideas for new rides would be sweet! I'd wanna draw a
crazy dinosaur safari coaster, where you go back in time
through all these flashing lights, like [makes noises: "ZHU
ZHU ZHUUU!"], and then you come out on the other side into a
jungle filled with all kinds of scaly dinosaurs and bubbling
lava pits!

EMILY
That sounds fun!

EMILY
You know, we should get back to the lab so we can work more on
your theme park model now that we're picked up some tips!
...But not before we take a ride on Steel Vengeance!

SFX: A roller coaster zooms quickly past; screaming
passengers.

WINSTON
(awe) WHOH! Steel Vengeance?! That roller coaster is
massive!

EMILY
It sure is! It's 205 feet or 62 meters high and it set ten
world records when it opened in 2018! And it's also the
world's first hybrid coaster, made of both steel and wood.
(then) You ready?

WINSTON
Are you kidding? I was born ready for this... Let's gooo!

EMILY
Hey there! Thanks so much for joining us to explore the
crazy, zany job of amusement park designers! Whether you're

an artist, a builder, or you simply love going to amusement parks and experiencing fun thrills, there could be an opportunity for <u>you</u> to work at an amusement park someday, too. See you next time!

EMILY - ALT Lingokids CTA:
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