



# Season 3, Episode 44: Middle Grade and Mysteries + Book Polygamy

Mon, 6/14 • 47:06

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 00:10

Hey readers, welcome to the Currently Reading podcast. We are bookish best friends who spend time every week talking about the books that we read recently. And as you know, we won't shy away from strong opinions. So get ready.

**Kaytee Cobb** 00:23

We are light on the chitchat, heavy on the book talk, and our descriptions will always be spoiler free. We'll discuss our current reads, a bookish deep dive, and then we'll press books into your hands.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 00:33

I'm Meredith Monday Schwartz, a mom of four and full time CEO living in Austin, Texas. And even after 26 years of raising readers, I still get surprised by them.

**Kaytee Cobb** 00:44

And I'm Kaytee Cobb. I'm a homeschooling mom of four living in New Mexico. And I am a book polygamist. This is episode number 44 of season three, and we're so glad you're here.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 00:54

Well, that makes good sense, Kaytee, that you're a book polygamist. And you're kind of turning me into one too, which is why today's today's show we're going to talk about how many books do we read at once? This is a question we've gotten from a few people. And I feel like we have some big answers to this question.

**Kaytee Cobb** 01:09

I think it's going to be a more extensive deep dive than one. So

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 01:17

Right. If we like our listeners, we won't be we won't have chosen a deep dive where the answer is "I just read one. What about you? Yeah, me too".

**Kaytee Cobb** 01:23

Okay. Okay, good times. Later! Yes, that's our deep dive for later. But before we get started with that, and any of our regular stuff, we're gonna do a little ad for ourselves this week, and talk about Patreon. And this week, we really wanted to take some time to highlight the fact that when you guys tune in to

Currently Reading every week, you know that you are getting whatever that timestamp is completely commercial free. That whole entire 40 minutes to an hour is dedicated to books and we love being able to do that for you every week. But part of what we wanted to talk about is the way that happens is with our patrons. We do not have to have ads, every podcast has to make their own business decisions. Sometimes you're talking 10 to 15 minutes of ads in a 45 minute show. We're not doing that to you over here, because we've made that decision for our business, and our patrons help make it happen. So we just want to invite anyone who really loves the fact that we're not talking about razors and suitcases every week to jump on over to Patreon and consider supporting us at five bucks a month, especially because you not only get an ad free podcast, you get tons of bonus content, and the opportunity to be part of our amazing bookish friends community. And all of that is worth way more than five bucks.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 02:40

Right? Right, exactly. So many people say heck, just the fact that there are no ads is the reason that you know, \$5 a month would make sense. So yeah, it's a it's definitely a good deal. And we you know, we prefer it that way that all the time we would normally put into ads, we can put into our Patreon content. And just very frankly, it's just a lot more fun.

**Kaytee Cobb** 03:01

It's so much more fun. Our bookish friends are the best, which leads me to bookish moments, because that's related to mine. But I want to hear about yours. Meredith, what is your bookish moment this week?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 03:11

Alright, so I mentioned in my bite size intro, I've been a parent for 26 years, right? And so we have raised four children. We take raising readers really, really seriously. I want to say a couple of things about this, though, because I think an assumption that a lot of people make Kaytee about you and me is that we each have four kids, and we talk about our kids and reading and all of that a lot. I think that they assume that our kids are like ink drinker kids, right? These children who they come out the womb reading a Nancy Drew novel. That is not I won't speak for your kids, Kaytee, but that is not true for any of my four kids. Absolutely none of them have been really natural readers, despite all the things that I have done even with my older kids, really to, you know, to raise readers. My point is that a you can't just assume that because we like to read our kids do we have some reluctant readers. But secondly, I am continually surprised by my older kids, but most recently by my youngest when they will turn into rabid readers, which has happened with two of my four kids. Absolutely rabid readers as adults, these kids who I could I barely could convince when they were younger. And then Jackson the other day, he, Jackson is my most reluctant reader. Right. I the other day, I had gone to library and I had gotten a stack of books for him. And then I gotten a stack of books for me. And he went over and he grabbed a biography of Elon Musk out of my pile. Now this is a child who I have trouble convincing him to read George Brown Class Clown. I mean, this is a child who just like the Wimpy Kids are the most effort he wants to put into reading a print book on his own. He pulls this Elon Musk biography, off the stack. And of course, you know, he's like, Mom, can I read this? I'm like, absolutely. Right. I'm not gonna say a single word, right? You know, like, Hmm, I don't know, that seems like, No, I'm like, absolutely. See what you think. So we do this 20 minute a night reading thing that we do. As a family, we all sit and read with an ASMR room in the background for 20 minutes. And would you know, every day last week, he pulled

that same book, and he read it every single night. And after we were done, he would tell us all of these details about Elon Musk. The take home here is not Oh, look at Meredith bragging about her kid reading a biography of Elon Musk. No, you guys. The point is, you never know, when your kid is going to go from being I will only read Wimpy Kid to let me be interested in this other kind of book. And all we have to do to be raising readers, the only expectation as parents we need to have is that we continue to have lots of different book choices available to our kids. That's all we need to do. So if you're sitting there thinking, my kids don't seem to want to read as much as all everyone else's are. Tomorrow, it could happen. Yeah. And also, you know, Jackson may very well never pick up another biography and go bounce back back to George Brown Class Clown. And that's totally fine. But you never know when that moment is going to strike.

**Kaytee Cobb** 06:38

Yes, I agree. And, and my kids consistently surprised me as well. We don't allow screens during meals. But when daddy is working, they are allowed to bring any book they want to the table. And sometimes I'm like, that's an interesting choice. Not sure how I feel about an encyclopedia at the lunch table. But if that's what you want to do, sounds good to me. And that's what they'll flip through. And I mean, same.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 07:03

Yeah. Well, you know, when I was little I read medical encyclopedias cover to cover because, you know, I was weird and had an anxiety disorder, and was positive I had breast cancer when I was six, true story. I read every single thing I could possibly read on it, because when I was six, I was positive I had it. So anyway, yeah, encyclopedias at the dinner table, I would have been all over it.

**Kaytee Cobb** 07:25

Perfect. You know, that's probably more...

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 07:28

more information than anyone wanted about me as a six year old.

**Kaytee Cobb** 07:31

My kids my seven and 10 year old both really love reading the book that I got about, like age appropriate how babies are made, and what puberty is like, and that they read that at the lunch table pretty regularly. And I'm like, Oh, great. Okay. And they'll ask questions. And we just have a whole conversation about all kinds of private areas.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 07:54

Minestrone administration at Kaytee's house.

**Kaytee Cobb** 08:02

Macaroni actually not minestrone. That's fancy. Okay,

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 08:05

You're right. You're right. I was looking for an M word.

**Kaytee Cobb 08:08**

All right. Well, that was delightful. My bookish moment this week, like I said, has a little bit to do with our bookish friends. being the best friends. This is not the first time this has happened this year. But it's the first time I got to be in charge of it. As most of you know by now, our Mindy had a thing happen. She's okay. She's okay, I want to put that right at the top here. She had a minor procedure, and it turned into a major thing. And I put a call out on Facebook for gift cards for donations to help her ease her recovery. I had to do it there, so I could hide it from her. So please don't ask me about not putting it on, like the big podcast account or whatever, cuz I've gotten a lot of pushback about this. Within less than 24 hours, I have gotten hundreds of dollars of donations and gift cards for general spoiling of our Mindy. And almost to the penny. It all came from bookish friends, most of whom have never met Mindy in real life. And I sat there and and got weepy over it, because that's the kind of community reading builds. And that's the kind of community that the bookish friends are building together. They love hard, and they are not scared to step in when they need to. And, and I've been on the other side of that when our family got COVID getting gift cards and getting loved on by the bookish friends and just being shocked that people care that much. You know, it was just amazing. And I was just so honored to get to go to Mindy and be like so we have hundreds of dollars. How would you like to be spoiled as you recover from this and we both just cried. It was amazing, super bookish because the bookish friends are the best friends.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 09:47**

Yeah, that was so wonderful to watch and Mindy was, she was just absolutely so impacted and felt so loved. It really is. I mean, there's 1000 people in the bookish friends Facebook group. And yet it is my favorite corner of the internet. It is so much good book talk. And so much good book friendship and I just I love it.

**Kaytee Cobb 10:09**

I love it too. It's really special and I don't ever want to cry on the podcast, but I got a little close there. So let's talk about currently reads and pivot to something I'm not gonna cry over. What do you got Meredith?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 10:21**

Pivots. Okay. My first book is a book that I actually heard about. I've talked a little bit about an Instagram account that I follow called @linesiunderline Kerry's though Kerry is the owner of that account, I absolutely love her. And she was talking about a book called Breadcrumbs by Anne Ursu. And it's my perfect catnip kind of book. It is middle grade, and it's a fairy tale retelling. So none of this is going to surprise you guys. Here's the setup. Our lead character is Hazel. And Hazel is a shy, sweet little 10 year old girl. And at the beginning of our story, her life is falling apart. Her parents have recently divorced. She started the fifth grade at a brand new school and she's really having trouble making friends. She feels very ostracized. Either because she's adopted she is or because she largely kind of lives in these dreamed up fantasy worlds. And all of that ends up making her seem distracted and kind of off. So she's having a really hard time fitting in his only respite in her really difficult life right now is Jack, her best friend for as long as she can remember and the only person who understands her and makes her feel like her quirkiness is okay. But one fateful day, out on the playground, Jack gets something stuck in his eye. And not long after the incident, he strangely becomes like a completely different person, his odd ball funny nature completely disappears, and he ditches Hazel as a friend, and

then he disappears completely. While everyone else is convinced that Jack is just going through some growing pains, Hazel is certain that something otherworldly is going on. And she's proven correct when she discovers that a witch has kidnapped Jack and whisked him away into the woods. So Hazel arms herself just a few of her possessions, her knowledge of fairy tales and all the courage that she has, and sets off on a journey into a magical forest to rescue her best friend. So this book has a magical mirror who shards have the power to change people. A really sweetly realistic view of friendship at this age, and a super engaging mix of modern life and fairy tale vibes. And I think this was the piece that I liked the most about it. There were scenes there were a lot of scenes in both worlds, our everyday world and in this magical world. Most of the time, I'm waiting to get back to the magical world. In this particular book, I really loved the scenes just in our normal regular world. I do want to note that this is a retelling of the Snow Queen fairy tale, but it has just such a great modern twist on it. It's so much about friendship and again, kind of like when you reach me it's one of those books that makes you remember exactly what it was like to be a fifth grader. So I think this book is a great book to pick up over the summer for you reader or for your especially third through sixth graders who want a book where they will feel really seen but also where they can get some of that fantasy fairy tale vibe of felt like that. So this is *Breadcrumbs* by Anne Ursu.

**Kaytee Cobb** 13:46

That sounds great. And it pairs really nicely with my first pick this week, which is also middle grade. It's called *Ophie's Ghosts* by Justina Ireland. This was recommended in the bookish friends group by Taylor Galvin because she picked it up and she said, when you pick up a book and the audiobook narrator says those four magic words, read by Bahni Turpin. And I was like, I need it. I need it right now. But this is middle grade from the author of one of my YA favorites. Justina Ireland is the author of *Dread Nation* and *Deathless Divide*, right civil war with zombies, right, loved, loved this series. And so I knew it didn't matter what she was writing. I was gonna pick it up. And this is a completely new story written for a younger audience. Ophelia is our main character. So when I say Ophie that is short for Ophelia. I don't love it.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 14:39

Nick. Yeah, I don't like that, nick.

**Kaytee Cobb** 14:40

Yeah. But she has recently moved to Pittsburgh with her mom into her grandma's house from the countryside of Georgia. The city has a personality all its own, and that personality includes ghosts. It's 1922 and Ophie's father has recently died, which is when she learned she has the sight. Now in a big city, there's plenty to see with that sight because people live and die all over the place. Thankfully, the sight passes through the female line. So she's able to go to her grandmother for advice and learn about her new skill. While working for a woman in town Ophie gets drawn into a mystery by one of the spirits she sees. And of course, as a precocious 12 year old, she has to take it upon herself to solve it. This was so fun and the sense of place in Pittsburgh is so strong. I will make a slight note here that there are chapters told from the point of view of inanimate objects, like the city itself, the trolley car, the money passing from one person to the next. And it took me a while to get into that groove and be like, Okay, this is a different thing we're doing here. I'm not totally sure I love it. By the time I got into the story, I understood how those chapters played in and I did end up enjoying them. But at the beginning, I kind of

wanted to cut them all out. So I did really, really though love the chapters from Ophie's point of view, and totally got on board with this story. It's Ophie's Ghosts by Justina Ireland.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 16:10**

The sounds really, really good. I loved Dread Nation, which is one that you that you brought to us and I was so, I loved that book. This sounds like the perfect middle grade. And what a great pairing for summertime reading for you know, for any of your kids who are looking for great books over the summer. That's a good combo. I like that. It's fun. All right, my next read is squarely in my real my mystery wheelhouse. So if you love All Things Murderful with Meredith, which is part of our Patreon content, you will absolutely love this book. So listen up. This is The Ruin by Dervla McTiernan. And you guys, one of the bookish friends recommended this book to me, and I feel so horrible that I can't, I can't find who it was. Because they really took the time to recommend this. To me, it was a fantastic recommendation, I took 15 minutes could not find it. So please, when you hear this, let us know who you are. And thank you, because this is a really good one. Okay. This is definitely one of those books, where if I set it up too much, it's just going to confuse you because you really need the book itself to kind of lay things out and make it make sense. So I'll keep this tight. Alright, so we have two inciting incidents. Back in 1993 rookie cop Cormac Reilly is called to the scene of a crumbling manor house in which an alcohol soaked mother has died, leaving two young children alone and afraid. And then 20 years later, one of those young children who's now an adult, commits suicide, or it seems, Cormac Reilly who now is a seasoned detective is back on the case, trying to figure out what one crime has to do with the other. All right, this certainly isn't the hardest core or most graphic mystery that I've ever read. But it does have some rough subject matter that just right at the start, I want to mention trigger warnings for suicide, child abuse and child neglect. For sure. This is this is what this book is about. And I really want you to know big heads up for this book, if you are a fan of Tana French's Dublin murder squad books. Because if you are, grab this book right now, if you've been waiting for Tana French to put out more books in the Dublin Murder Squad kind of vein, but you've been really disappointed by her latest offerings. Grab The Ruin because it's it's right there in that same wheelhouse. It's got all that good stuff. It's got the Irish setting. This time we're in Galway, which is a little bit grittier. It's got a complex, multi year, multi layered mystery. It's got complicated police politics, so relationships between the detectives, and that great interplay between all the partners, and will they won't they in all of that. I liked the detective Cormac Reilly character a lot in his appearance in both the 1993 timeline. And the 2013 timeline was a very interesting layer. He's very aware of kind of who he was as a police officer and detective in each one of those timelines. I did think that it needed a little bit of editing. I think if it had been just 50 pages shorter, it would have been very close to being a perfect mystery. But I was definitely interested all the way through in a police procedural kind of way. So there's not a popcorn thriller, you're going to have to read along and you need to want to be in on getting all of the details of the case like we do with a police procedural, but I was really glad that I went on this ride. There are three books in this series and the latest one just came out in 2020. So this might be a great series to dive into if you've been really waiting for Tana French to add to her Dublin Murder Squad series. This is The Ruin by Dervla McTiernan

**Kaytee Cobb 20:01**

So fun because now we get to stay in the UK, but go to my wheelhouse. No perfect. My next book this week is Major Pettigrew's Last Stand by Helen Simonson.



**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 20:14

Oh backlist, Kaytee.

**Kaytee Cobb** 20:16

Backlist Katie. I know we're surprised, right and as a lover of curmudgeon lit it was full on ridiculous that I had not read this gem which is from 2010. Thankfully, bookish friend Marli came through and she sent it to me and that most amazing like she did this to all of us. She spoiled us rotten sent an amazing collection of gifts and goodies and books a few months back, which is what spurred me to finally pick it up and I'm so glad I did. We are in Edgcombe St. Mary in the English countryside where we meet the retired Major Ernest Pettigrew. He's kind of like a manly version of Miss Manners. He's very type One -things shall be done the correct way. Tea will be served as so every day. His brother's death sparks an unexpected friendship with Miss Ali, the Pakistani shopkeeper from the village nearby. The way that this couple comes together and starts a little bit of a thing is completely endearing. Especially as so much of their conversation centers on books. It's delightfully bookish the way that they begin this friendship with each other. Since she is foreign to this quaint little village. She's often ostracized and sometimes faces terribly racist comments from others. It doesn't matter to Ernest though, who finds himself seeking her company more and more frequently. This book completely captured my heart in a wonderful way and I found myself toward the end, not crying, but a little verklempt and sending one perfect paragraph to Marli. And I said this paragraph. I'm so glad you had me read this book. I loved it so much. So if you love Ove, or Britt-Marie, or Olive Kitteridge, this book is absolutely for you. It's Major Pettigrew's Last Stand by Helen Simonson.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 22:03

All right, so kind of staying in that same gentle vein. The third book I want to talk about this week is Arsenic and Adobo by Mia P Manansala. This was a Book of the Month pick and I absolutely loved it. It was the right book at the right time. So here's our setup. Our lead character is the delightfully normal Lila Macapagal who's just moved back home after she's had a horrible breakup. Well Lila isn't thrilled with the turn that her life has taken. Two steps back not any steps forward. Her really close family is delighted by this turn of events because she is quickly tasked with saving her aunt Rosie's failing restaurant, and she has to deal with a group of matchmaking Auntie's who shower her with love, and lots of judgment about the fact that she's still single among a lot of other things in her life. But when a notoriously nasty food critic who also happens to be an ex boyfriend of Lila's drops dead moments after having had a public argument with Lila. Her life quickly takes a turn from annoying and mundane to scary because now the police are looking at Lila as their main subject, their main suspect. And because the murder happened in the family restaurant, it's now a crime scene. So the restaurant has had to close, which means they're losing money every single day. So everything is high stakes for Lila. And she and her bestie and her aunties have to solve this mystery before they lose everything that they love. You is this is a Cozy Mystery set in a Filipino restaurant. And it is so fantastic. It is just exactly what what you want your cozy mysteries to be. You want to love all the characters and Lila and her whole family are absolutely so wonderful. And this is one of those books that before you start reading it, you better get yourself a great Filipino restaurant nearby and put it on your Doordash subscription because they talk about food all the way through this and it sounded so so good. This is smart and sweet. It's got its peopled with decent people that you want to root for all the way through. It reminds

me of those really great kinds of Ellery Adams mysteries where you know, you're reading a cosy, right like there's a formula to it, but you're enjoying yourself the whole way through so it doesn't even matter if it if it's got a formula to it. This is just what I needed after having read a bunch of much darker reads. And I absolutely loved it. So this is Arsenic and Adobo by Mia P. Manansala

**Kaytee Cobb** 24:46

My third book this week is One Two Three by Laurie Frankel. And I was very worried about

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 24:53

Yes, yes, yes. Talk about a book with a lot of expectation on it.

**Kaytee Cobb** 24:58

I know. I figured that was no way no possible chance that Laurie Frankel would be able to capture my heart the way that she did with her debut novel This is How it Always Is, one of my very favorite books of all time, and one of my very first presses on the podcast, but I needn't have worried because Frankel crafts a character, and a plot like nobody else. Here in this book, we meet the Mitchell triplets in the town of Bourne. Bourne is a weird little place because 17 years ago, through an industrial situation, the water turned green. The Mitchell triplets were born shortly thereafter and came of age, watching their fearsome and fearless mother Nora fight against the company that poisoned the town. These three girls are named Mab, Monday and Mirabel, and you keep them straight because number one has one syllable to her name number two has two syllables to her name, and number three has three syllables to her name. Mab, Monday and Mirabelle. And Laurie Frankel talks about this in the audio book how she did that to help the reader keep the three of them straight, because three triplets with M names is a little difficult. They are all so different, though, including differences not just in their personality, but in their abilities. Mirabel is unable to walk or speak, but is brilliant. Monday is like like Stephen Hawking, like she's brilliant, right? Monday is bookish beyond belief and has turned herself into the town's ad hoc librarian after the actual library closed. And Mab is the most typical of all of them with competing missions in life. She wants to love her mom and sisters well, but she also wants to get the heck out of this crummy little town. So she has to hold those intentions. This book made me laugh and cry and cheer out loud. I was like, Yes, do it. I was completely captured by these three sisters and the other ancillary characters from this town. I loved every second of their story. I was picturing it like Flint, Michigan, their water crisis, right? And you sit there and you're like, why doesn't everybody just leave? Right? Why would you stay when that's how bad it is. But that's not always an option. And in this town, it's not an option. And so you get to know this town. And these people, and they know each other so well, because nobody comes to Bourne and nobody leaves. So they've all been together in this mess for 17 years. You love these characters. I loved these characters by the end. And again, I was worried. I was like, there's no way. This is How it Always Is was basically a perfect book. There's no way. Well, One Two three is basically a perfect book. I loved every second. It was amazing. And I I kind of didn't want to be able to say that. I kind of wanted to have a spicy opinion, because it does seem like a lot of people love it. Unfortunately, or fortunately, I loved it too. It's One Two Three by Laurie Frankel.



**Meredith Monday Schwartz 27:58**

That makes me so happy because this is how it always is one of those books where if I want her to I want to love everything she writes, because I loved that book so much. Yes. So I'm I am really, really happy that that that that was a hit for you.

**Kaytee Cobb 28:15**

Okay, those were our six current reads. Which means now we get to get into our deep dive, which is how many books do you read at one time? Which could be a very short answer, but we don't think it's going to be so Meredith. Walk us through it. What do you got happening all at once?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 28:29**

Right. Well, so we wanted to do this deep dive because we've gotten this question a lot. Holly Mascaró, who's a great sort of thread starter or question asker conversation starter on in the bookish friends group. She says I would love to hear from you guys about whether or not you read monogamously. So one book at a time? Or do you read multiple? And if you read multiple, how and when do you prioritize reading which like do you have a fiction and a nonfiction going and audio. Do you do one in the morning and one in the evening? Sort of how rigid are you with all of this? So I think that was a really great question. And it was one that we got a lot for the Ask Us Anything too. So that was why we wanted to cover it today. It's interesting for me, Kaytee, because I feel like historically, I've always been reading more than one book, but really, it's either I'm reading one book or I'm reading two books, right and kind of I used to do like a, I'd read like a business related or a productivity related book in the morning, when I kind of did this morning time. And then I would be reading something in fiction. But then my workouts took over that morning routine. And now I read it's all gotten completely out of control because now I'm reading, I read one book in print. I'm reading I'm now doing a slow but steady in print. I'm doing one book on audio. I'm doing one book with Roxana all the time. Which we try to do ours on e-readers because we think it makes buddy reading easier when you can just be like get a percentage, right? You can tell each other your percentage. And then I am almost always doing some additional book on my e-reader. Just because I always like to have options in case I want to read late at night or whatever. So that's at least five books going at a time, which I feel like just in the last couple months that has because I didn't read on an e-reader for a long time. And so now that's become a thing, right? And I didn't buddy read ever, and now that's become a thing. So it's just it's so it's five books at a time.

**Kaytee Cobb 30:39**

Do you have certain times of day that you like? Do you always knock out your slow but steady at lunch or whatever? Does that play into this somehow?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 30:49**

Yes. So I'm fairly free flowing, but for a couple of things. So the audio book, always, always, always is when I'm out on a run or doing a run of any kind of my treadmill. And when I do what I call my "sunny delight", which is every day I try to get 20 minutes of sun time outside. And so I'm always listening to my so it's always audiobook during those times. That's just a pairing that is you know, is always paired up for me. And then I try to read a little bit whatever book Roxanna and I are reading. We try to do a little bit in the morning and a little bit at night so that we're making continual progress on it. So usually first

thing in the morning and last thing at night, I'll be reading that book on my e-reader. But other than that, I kind of fit everything else in as I as my mood strikes.

**Kaytee Cobb** 31:44

Right. Okay, okay. I like that. I am also a polygamist. As I mentioned in my bite size intro, I usually have like you five books going at once. But sometimes I go over that. So they break down like this: I have one book on my Kindle, that anymore is always a galley, I no longer buy Kindle books, or borrow them from the library. Because Kindle reading is my slowest reading, because I only do it at night. which usually means I fall asleep like 15 minutes later, I'm not making big chunks of progress on my Kindle book very often. I would also take my Kindle to the beach, but because of COVID there has been no beach time. So that's not happening either. I always have one audiobook going on my Soundpeats earbuds, which we get questions about all the time. So I'm just going to make sure I say Soundpeats here so it can get linked in the show notes. This can be any kind of book I will listen to whatever fiction, nonfiction, mystery, thriller. Definitely character driven needs to be on audio, right? One paper book for funsies, which can be again, any kind of book, one slow but steady of some kind, and one read aloud with the kids. The part where it gets out of control for me like those are five and I can I can keep track of those pretty well, when it gets out of control is that slow but steady of some kind. Lately, this has been at least one short story collection. Right now I'm reading one poetry collection, one ethnic collection and one anthology. And each of those to me are best read in tiny little chunks. So that's the way I do it. And I knock that out... all at a get usually so either first thing in the morning, or at lunchtime, I will sit down with all of those books that are slow but steady reading. And I'll take care of the chapter that I was supposed to read that day or the two poems or the one essay or whatever, so that I can get through. You know what I was supposed to read my homework for the day. And then the rest of the day, I'm just squeezing and reading wherever I can. So always at least five, sometimes up to eight, nine. When it gets to eight or nine, I start to get a little bit stir crazy. No, not crazy. Not stir crazy, but like frazzled feeling. It's a lot of plots to hold in there at once.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 33:59

Right, but right. The biggest thing that I've tried to do is I have tried to make sure that I'm reading five really disparate books. So if Roxanna and I are reading a mystery, I won't have another mystery going on my e-reader or you know what I mean? Or I won't have a similar, I tried to make sure there are five really different books. And that seems to be really helpful to me.

**Kaytee Cobb** 34:27

I do too, although the only time that they get really confused in my head is if it's two of the same kind in the same format. So if I have right two mysteries going on my Kindle, it's a problem. If I have two audio books going at once, they can't be both the same genre, but I can listen to nonfiction on audio, first little bit steady, and then switch to a thriller. No problem.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 34:47

So is there one format of books that you that you find to be the easiest or you find yourself drawn to the most?

**Kaytee Cobb 34:58**

I am able to fit in the most audio book reading, because of the nature of my life with these kids running around all the time. I fit it in usually either driving or puttering is what I call it around the house. So, cleaning, doing laundry, picking up toys, like there's so many freakin toys in this house, yelling at children, spraying them with the hose outside, whatever needs to happen. So that and that can happen at any time all day long. So I almost always have one earbud in my ear. So I can click that thing on and off all day long. And that means it's really easy for me to get through a single audio book in a day. But other than that, I like to make sure that there's time to sit down and read a physical book for at least a part of the day. And that's my second favorite way. So I make time I make the time for sitting down and reading those other physical books, because that's important to me.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 35:53**

Right. And I find myself... I love reading, I love listening to audiobooks. I've loved to read physical books, and Lord knows my house is swimming in them. And I love to buy them and organize them and all of that. But I find myself being more and more drawn to reading on my Kindle, which again is so strange, because for all of this time, I have not been into an e-reader. But when I got it, so I got a Kindle Oasis, which I mean I which I mentioned in particular, because I think that the way that it has this amber colored backlight option that's not available, for example, in the Paperwhites. That is, for me, there's two things about the Kindle Oasis, or what I put what I have that it's been a game changer for me that amber colored backlight key enables me to read longer at night, even when I'm sleepy or my eyes are tired. And it also doesn't shine as much in like Johnny's not as bothered by that particular kind of light. So for whatever reason, I have found myself much more able to read for longer periods of time at night on my Kindle. And then the other thing is, I have a case for my Kindle, that is this CaseBot this leather CaseBot case, that is really beautiful, like I enjoy looking at it. So it's really it kind of has like an aesthetically pleasing, it's aesthetically pleasing. And it also is very comfortable both in my hand and it has a super sturdy stand. And so now I find myself on my reading on my Kindle at lunch instead of watching TV at lunch, which is I take about 20 minutes for lunch, I used to use that 20 minutes to watch TV. Now I'll put up my mice, you know, put my case up, we're using the stand. I'll read I also read when I'm blow drying my hair. I'll read on my Kindle when I'm blow drying my hair. And it takes me like 30 minutes or more to blow dry my hair. And so that's 30 minutes of reading that I wasn't getting before. So I feel like the Kindle and it just enables me to work in reading at times that otherwise I wasn't doing it in a really comfortable way. So I keep finding myself being drawn more to my Kindle and I'm find myself availing myself of more of those those deal. You know, the the kind of deals that happen all the time to

**Kaytee Cobb 38:12**

They're nefarious!

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 38:15**

Yeah, right. So So yes, so the Kindle has definitely added to my overall reading of multiple books at a time. I think overall, I really like it because I feel like I don't have to just be faithful to one book. And if one book's a little bit slow. I'm you know, I'm still reading for other books. And also, sometimes I'll have this feeling of like, Oh, I'm making slow progress on all of these books, but I haven't finished anything. And then all of a sudden, I'll have one weekend. I had one magical weekend a couple weekends ago where I finished four of my five books.

**Kaytee Cobb** 38:48

love that so much.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 38:50

And I was like, What am I going to do getting to choose four brand new books? It was so exciting.

**Kaytee Cobb** 38:56

I love it. I love like filling in my reading log and be like, dun dun dun dun. And I finished four books in one day when really I've been reading a lot of for a long while.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 39:07

Exactly. Being able to all of a sudden having those slots empty out and being able to choose something new. That's really exciting for me. Yes.

**Kaytee Cobb** 39:15

Love it. Okay, well, we had a lot of words about that. I think. I think you guys are gonna have a lot of words about this too. So of course, we will ask you about it on Thursday, please come over to that Instagram post because we love seeing what you thought of that deep dive and how you interact with your book monogamy and polygamy.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 39:34

Right? How many books do you read at a time? Let us we want to know your number. What's your number?

**Kaytee Cobb** 39:39

Yes, everybody has a number. Right? And and If your answer is three, and you don't expand, we're going to be mad at you. So just know that going going forward. Alright, let's press some books. Let's add some to those TBR is for what do you want to put in all those spots? Meredith?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 39:54

All right, well, thinking about my bookish moment of the week had me thinking about books that I've Read with Jackson that have really, his reaction to them has surprised me. And so it's not going to surprise any of you but I went to our current are currently reading books to press list. And Kaytee, I found out that we have not actually pressed Ghost Boys by Jewell Parker Rhodes. And we've so we've talked about this several times on the show, so I'm not going to belabor it. But it has got to be on the press list because we both feel when we both are absolutely in love with this book. And it's just it just has to be on that list. So really briefly, the book will sound familiar to you. This is the story of 12 year old Jerome, he's shot by a police officer who mistakes his toy gun for a real one. And as a ghost, he observes the devastation that is unleashed on his family and the community as a whole in the wake of this shooting. And we also along with meeting Jerome, after he has passed on, we also meet another ghost, the ghost of Emmett Till, who was another young African American boy from a very different time, but who died under similar circumstances. And Emmett Till helps Jerome process what's happened to him and realize and recognize how historical racism led to the events of both of their both

of their lives, we get to see the effects of what has happened not just on Jerome and his family, but on the family of the police officer who killed him. And that's a really impactful part of this. So this is a book that I buddy read with Jackson, who was had just turned nine at the time. And what I said at the time is that it was a really seminal experience for him because this book affected him deeply. This he he he wept openly, not just at Jerome being killed in the way that he was killed, but also in the circumstances that we learned about Jerome's life all the way through. And Jackson, given the life that he's led, really expressed to me how much the book helped him to understand how different some other kids are growing up and how much he needs to be aware of that. And he needs to really step in their shoes. And for my nine year old, to have that aha moment. This was a really key moment for him, I think is a reader and for him as a person. So this book, as I said, when when we I talked about initially, it's told in alternating timelines, and both before and after Jerome's death. As an adult reader, this wasn't difficult for me at all, the timelines are not complicated. But for Jackson, as a young reader, he hadn't. He hadn't experienced this in a book before. So I was glad to be buddy reading it with him because it helped me to help him understand the concept of dual timelines and how they work and we go back and forth. So I was really happy that we read it together for that reason. And because it gave us an awful lot of stuff, to talk about really important things that I was very glad to have opened up for us in our conversations. I think this book should be taught in every single middle school. I wanted to talk about it right now, too, because we are beginning for most of us summer vacations. This is a great time to buddy read this with your kids, whether it's your middle schooler, your fourth grader, your high schooler. This book is not childish. It's a book you can absolutely hand to any reader and they are going to find something that they will love on the page. This is Ghost Boys by Jewell Parker Rhodes.

**Kaytee Cobb** 43:31

Every time you talk about that book, my heart grows three sizes. I just want you to know that.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 43:35

It's another one of those books Kaytee that but for you would not have come into my to my reading life. And it is one of my all time favorites ever. And it was absolutely it added to my parenting of my child to read this with him.

**Kaytee Cobb** 43:51

It's incredible. It's incredible. I'm so glad you put it on the press list. My press this week is the Song of Achilles by Madeline Miller. So I am going to continue my gushing over retellings of Greek mythology from a new point of view. This is the Trojan War, told through the eyes of Achilles and Patroclus. We get to watch them grow from boys to men and come of age during a time of war. I gave this book five stars in 2019 when I read it, but I do want to note that I had a hard time getting into it on paper when I first picked it up. The audio book narrator is exceptional and pulled me straight into the story. This is a great read for Pride Month you guys know that I want to continue to press great Pride books into your hands. And you will be rooting for "Patrochilles" which is their ship name, the entire time that you read this story. If you've been loving the more recent Greek mythology releases like Circe, Lovely War, Olympus, Texas and more. You absolutely need to pick up this backless gem from Madeline Miller. You won't regret it. And if you want a contemporary readalike and I'm sorry Megan, she these show notes, I'm just putting all the titles in, I've got Red White and Royal Blue by Casey McQuiston, which seems on the surface like nothing like this book, but it has an alternate Earth history with a similar story angle that will

surprise you and is great for Pride Month so squeeze it in anyway. My main for us this week though, is the Song of Achilles by Madeline Miller.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 45:25

I see what you did there. You snuck in two presses there.

**Kaytee Cobb** 45:27

There were like six actually, but we're going to call it two.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 45:30

Thank you, Megan for helping with the show notes. Alright, that is it for this week. As a reminder, here's where you can connect with us. You can find me I'm Meredith at @meredith.reads on Instagram.

**Kaytee Cobb** 45:40

And you can find me Kaytee at @notesonbookmarks on Instagram.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 45:44

Full show notes with the title of every book we mentioned in the episode and timestamps so you can zoom right to where we talked about it can be found at our website at [currentlyreadingpodcast.com](http://currentlyreadingpodcast.com)

**Kaytee Cobb** 45:55

You can also contact us directly at @currentlyreadingpodcast on Instagram or via email at [currentlyreadingpodcast@gmail.com](mailto:currentlyreadingpodcast@gmail.com).

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 46:03

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**Kaytee Cobb** 46:25

Your Patreon support, your recommendations, your shares, all of that are helping us to grow and get closer to our goals. Thanks for doing that friends.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 46:33

All right, until next week, happy reading Kaytee.

**Kaytee Cobb** 46:35

Happy writing Meredith.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 46:43

I'm Meredith Monday Schwartz, a mom of four and full time CEO living in Austin, Texas. And even after 26 years of reading.... my foot is cramping.



**Kaytee Cobb** 46:55

Is your mouth cramping too?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 46:57

Nope, nope. My foot is really... Ooh, okay.