



# Season 3, Episode 48: Very Special Episode - Ask Us Anything!

Mon, 7/12 • 54:39

**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've read recently. And as you know, we don't shy away from having strong opinions. So especially this week, you better get ready.

**Kaytee Cobb** 00:25

This week, we're heavy on the chitchat, light on the book talk, and we'll have no descriptions and none of them will be spoiler free. We're doing a very special episode.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 00:32

I'm Meredith Monday Schwartz, a mom of four and full time CEO living in Austin, Texas. And for better or for worse, I will answer almost any question.

**Kaytee Cobb** 00:41

And I'm Kaytee Cobb. I'm a homeschooling mom of four living in New Mexico and I am an open book. This is episode number 48 of season three. And we're so glad, all of us that you are here. Hey, friends. Hey, everybody.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 00:54

All four of us are here today. Mindy, Mary, Kaytee and Meredith. I don't think we've ever done a Big Show with all four of us. Am I right?

**Kaytee Cobb** 01:02

With four people all together ever? We've never had four people on mic at the same time, except COVIDeos. And it's we're a little nervous.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 01:09

Right? It can get a little messy. But we're going to try to keep it clean on every single level. Because this week we are doing our special episode Kaytee.

**Kaytee Cobb** 01:17

We are. This is our Ask Us Anything episode, which is now our third annual very exciting. And we had one year that was just Meredith and I. Last year, we invited Mindy to join us. And this year we have Mary as well. So the gang's all here. We are excited to get to these questions. And y'all we ended up

with 12 full pages of questions. There is no shortage of fodder. But we're not going to make this a 17 hour episode. So we're going to try and keep it tight.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 01:44

Right? Yes. Right.

**Kaytee Cobb** 01:45

If we can figure out the order,

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 01:47

Right, we've spent quite a bit of time trying to figure out the best way to handle the asking and the answering. So like Mary said, it's like a game. Just get into it. And the rules will start to make sense. So this is what we're going to do.

**Mary Heim** 01:59

Okay, this is a fun one to get started with. And I thought about it long and hard for two whole minutes. And I think I have flights of fancy with my habits that are anything other than reading. So while doing my nails is super fun. I do not think I could live another day if I were never able to buy new books. Even with the library. I really like having my own personal library. So nail polish, I will be done with at some point in my life, books never. Give me my books forever.

**Kaytee Cobb** 01:59

We'll see if we can handle it. We are four adult women. I think we can do it. And I'm going to get us started. And Mary, we got a question from listener Sarah Collica. And she wants to know, would you rather never be allowed to buy new books or never be allowed to buy new nail polish? I think I know the answer. But I want to know yours.

**Kaytee Cobb** 02:46

Pry my books out of my cold dead fingers right?

**Mary Heim** 02:49

Out of my cold, dead hands. Was that your thought? Kaytee? Is that where you thought I was gonna go?

**Kaytee Cobb** 02:53

I was pretty sure that I knew that Mary was going to give up that nail polish even though she's excellent at it. So I'm glad to know I was right.

**Mary Heim** 03:00

Thank you so much. You know me so well. I love it. Okay, so I'm going to Would you rather you, Meredith. Would you rather be able to re-read the entire Three Pines series for the first time, but you have to read them in random order, Oof. Or have all of your current reads chosen for you by somebody else?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 03:17

This is such a good question. Sarah is just really good at which would you rather because this was a tough, tough one. I am going to go with I would rather re-read the entire Three Pines series for the first time but out of order. There's simply no way like, all the joy of my reading life would be gone if my current reads were chosen by somebody else, no matter who that other person is. So for that reason, I think I would just read Three Pines out of order and I would figure it out. Right. I would just I would figure it out eventually. How, everything slotted together. That's such a good question.

**Mindy Brouse** 03:54

She knows you well.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 03:55

Okay, Mindy, Sarah's question for you is would you rather read only open door romances or be able to read whatever you want, But you have to re-read Lord of the Flies once a year? Again, Sarah should professionally make which would you rather questions. I mean, this should be her paid job.

**Mindy Brouse** 04:18

Gah when I saw that was like, peace out. I'm not going to be on the episode because I know they're asking me. Sarah, Well played, well played. That that did stump me for a while and I struggled with my answer. And I finally am going with I can't believe I'm gonna say this out loud. But I would have to read whatever I want, but reread the Lord of the Flies every year. Now Sarah, I will let you know you will get all the hate live tweeting during that reading. If you had said every month or every week, then I may have had a problem. But yeah, yeah, I would have to go with that, guys. I just couldn't read only open door that would... No, there's too many other great books and I would be like beet red the entire time and Kaytee and Meredith would be in hog heaven that I'd be dying. So there we go.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 05:12

Even I would not want to read only open door. No.

**Kaytee Cobb** 05:17

I would be here for the live tweets on that. That would be amazing.

**Mindy Brouse** 05:23

your that's exactly what would happen. Yeah.

**Kaytee Cobb** 05:27

I'm so excited about this in like my own brain.

**Mindy Brouse** 05:30

Just picturing that right. Just picturing me reading those. And Sarah I just think that was really a great question. And Meredith, you're right. She She should be professional, that great. Well played. Alright, so we're going to keep going with Sarah's because these are great openers. So Kaytee, would you rather read all five star books, but you're not allowed to talk to anyone about them or listen to all of your audio books at 1.0 speed?

**Kaytee Cobb** 05:58

Like I realized y'all said like, this was a really mean question. No, mine's the meanest Mine is the meanest.

**Mindy Brouse** 06:03

I think this was...

**Mary Heim** 06:05

it's a Sophie's Choice.

**Kaytee Cobb** 06:06

Terrible because I'm such a social creature, that that being able to read a fantastic book and not being allowed to talk to people about it would I think completely break me into a no- human being. Like, I just, oh my gosh, it would be so hard. But then listening at 1x now feels like actual physical torture. So that then I'm like, well, would I rather be a broken human? Or would I rather be tortured? I think, Oh, my gosh, I think what I'm gonna have to go with is that I would switch back to 1x on audiobooks, and I would pretty much just stop listening to audiobooks like I, I would just be like, well, I guess I'm done with that. Because if it's torture, or read slower and not be able to read while I'm cleaning, I guess I'm gonna have to give it up because it would be so bad.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 06:56

It would be bad, but it wouldn't be bad forever. I think it would be really hard. And then I think your brain would reassemble itself and I really think you would still be able to listen to audiobooks, you you wouldn't listen to as many. Because they're at 1x.

**Kaytee Cobb** 07:10

Oh my gosh, yeah, cuz

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 07:12

cuz you're at 3x right now, right?

**Kaytee Cobb** 07:13

Most of the time I'm at 3x now. Yeah, dude. That's stupid. So I'm, yeah, I mean, at this point, it's a broken ears thing and I don't know if I could unbreak them. But I hope you're right, that if I stopped listening at 3x, but it would eventually go back to normal brain.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 07:27

I think it would

**Mindy Brouse** 07:28

I do too.

**Mary Heim 07:28**

I don't know. I'm not confident that it would.

**Kaytee Cobb 07:31**

Like I'm pretty sure you're busted forever.

**Mary Heim 07:33**

I'm pretty sure your brain is broken forever, Kaytee.

**Kaytee Cobb 07:36**

All right. All right. Fair enough. Okay, so I have one for all of us. It's from my Heather. And her question is what is your dream vacation for a bookish retreat? Imbedded in that is would you rather go to the beach or the mountains? So Mary, you get to go anywhere and read books. Where do you want to go?

**Mary Heim 07:53**

I want to go somewhere... well, y'all know my love of hammocks. This this season in particular. So I want to go somewhere with a hammock, maybe on a beach, somewhere where it's nice and warm, and sunny outside and beautiful. I want to be able to dive jump in a pool. I think I'm gonna say let's go to Costa Rica. I'd like to go to Costa Rica for a bookish vacation. All right. Meredith, what about you? Where are you taking us?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 08:21**

I really love being able to read in a place that is very lit like right by a lake but with a ton of really, really gorgeous trees. So Vermont has a lot you know, has has places that are like waterside but then also has these gorgeous trees. So that's always where I would go for my reading retreat for sure. All right, Mindy, what about you? What's your reading retreat?

**Mindy Brouse 08:48**

Well, for sure the mountains it definitely want to be in the mountains. And if I'm if we're dreaming this like if this is just you know, I think we should go to the Swiss Alps. And I would love to have a beautiful chalet and we can go on beautiful walks and plop down somewhere and read or be in the, in the cabins and yeah, those beautiful vistas I've always wanted to go and I think, yeah, let's do that. Let's go do that together.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 09:16**

That's a great one.

**Mindy Brouse 09:18**

Yeah, Kaytee?

**Kaytee Cobb 09:19**

That's hard to follow up on you guys have really good ideas. I do like trees and water. So even just having to choose between beach or mountains is difficult for me. But I'm going to go with the place that I want to go more than anywhere which is Thailand. I want to go to Thailand. We've got lush jungles,

we've got the sea, right. It's very like lots of coastline and Thailand. And we have elephants, my ideal retreat. I get to sit on an elephant and it trundles me around the forest while I read my book. Okay, and someone serves me Thai food the entire time, which obviously needs to happen.

**Mindy Brouse** 09:54

That's a good little twist there you added I like it.

**Mary Heim** 09:57

I mean, that sounds like a year of vacations. We've got one a quarter, one per season. Great.

**Kaytee Cobb** 10:02

And we've done some that are great. And you know, summer versus fall versus winter. We can go to Thailand in the winter, you guys because it'll still be warm there. It's on the equator, it's fine.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 10:11

And well, Vermont has to be in the fall, it must be of course.

**Kaytee Cobb** 10:16

We don't want to freeze to death. So we will go to the Swiss Alps in the springtime when it's starting to thaw or summer, summer and then Mary's hammock. I mean, it's really good spring and summer, right. So we can swap you two.

**Mary Heim** 10:29

Yeah, yeah, Costa Rica is great anytime.

**Mindy Brouse** 10:31

Can we just put that on the calendar? I'll go and text Paul right now.

**Kaytee Cobb** 10:35

Okay. 2023, maybe we'll be gone for a year. See you guys later. Yeah.

**Mary Heim** 10:41

Fine. Okay. Okay, if we, let's imagine our perfect bookshop, right? All of us are in a dream location of our choosing, and we are running a bookshop together, who would be in charge of what and why. And I love that I get to start Meredith with this question. Because I feel like Meredith has Meredith has the brain to be able to slate us into the perfect spots. And I just want to hear Meredith's vision for our bookshop first. So Meredith, tell me about our bookshop.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 11:09

Oh, my gosh, okay. So here's the reason why I'm not interested in owning a bookshop with all of you, because I know that I would get stuck with all the work that isn't involved with choosing books, and selling books, to people like all this stuff that actually makes people want to run a bookshop, because when you actually own a bookshop, that's not at all what you do. So I would be doing like corporate taxes, and, you know, all all of that kind of stuff. And then the three of you would be like in charge of our

book buying and our social media and our community building, and I think you would be fantastic at that. But I would just be back, like incorporating us, and it would suck.

**Mindy Brouse** 11:51

Oh, my God, that's so accurate. Right,

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 11:54

I mean disagree with me! I'm 100% having to do that.

**Kaytee Cobb** 11:58

Tell me who does all the scheduling for Currently Reading? And who takes care of the money and the taxes? And

**Mindy Brouse** 12:06

Which makes her happy?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 12:08

right, yeah. And it's because I have another job. If this was our only work, like, I guess what I'm putting into this notion is that this was our own job, that this was exactly what we were doing. And then that's the case. So yes, I think Kaytee, there's no question that you would definitely get stuck with a lot of admin work too, for sure.

**Kaytee Cobb** 12:30

Because it's our podcast and our baby. And we get screwed is what you're saying.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 12:34

We do. Mindy and Mary are just they're just happy as lambs.

**Mary Heim** 12:41

Pressing books can we maybe we can in this dream scenario, we can just hire somebody to be our business manager. And then we can all do all the fun stuff.

**Kaytee Cobb** 12:50

Hey, Megan wants more work.

**Mary Heim** 12:52

I mean, there you go.

**Kaytee Cobb** 12:53

I can just put her on that. She's not here to check. Sorry, Megan. No,

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 12:57

Well, what so what I will say, in this store that we're that we're going to own, There's no question that there will be a corner of the store that will be made to look exactly like that storefront that Charlie Brown

had where for five cents, or I guess it was Lucy for five cents, what Lucy would give you therapy of some kind, Mary is going to sit behind that and she's going to give everyone reading therapy. So she's going to recommend a book for whatever ails you that for sure is going to happen. In fact, maybe our store should be called Reading Therapy, or Book Therapy, something like that.

**Mary Heim** 13:28

I will quit my job tomorrow to start that position.

**Kaytee Cobb** 13:33

I love that. Love it. And Mindy of course would be pairing like an outdoor adventure with the perfect book, right? She's gonna like set up some kind of like, either social gathering or hike. Yeah, that exactly emulates the book that is perfect for whatever is she's putting into your hands. So it's reading therapy, but it's like, exercise adjacent.

**Mary Heim** 13:56

Like an active book, like a book club. Mindy would be our book club manager. Right, her monthly zooms we transition it but into an active capacity. So we'd like hike and book club about this book this month. And then we'd like stand up paddleboard? I don't know, but

**Mindy Brouse** 14:13

I was trying to think it was like, I love that question. I thought it was a really clever because we all have so much in common, but we all have different strengths and different areas of expertise also. But the funny part is, I was like, I don't have anything to bring except I just wanted to sit and talk to people about books. Everybody else would do like the work and I'd be like, Hi, thanks for coming in. Do you want to talk about a book?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 14:36

And that's exactly what we need. Yeah, we must have that. That's the secret sauce.

**Kaytee Cobb** 14:42

You would be like a professional ambusher Yeah.

**Mindy Brouse** 14:46

Book ambusher,

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 14:47

A book ambusher.

**Mary Heim** 14:47

Book pusher.

**Mindy Brouse** 14:49

That was a good question. I'm glad you got to ask me



**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 14:51

All right was so what another question that we got that I am interested in because I know the answer for Kaytee, but I'm not sure I know the answer for the rest. Have you? What did you major in, in college? I, I was an English major, I'll tell you that I have a degree in English.

**Mindy Brouse** 15:05

I have a degree in Special Education with an emphasis in education for the Deaf. So I was a teacher for the Deaf.

**Kaytee Cobb** 15:12

I have a bachelor's in Religious Studies, which you cannot use for anything and a master's in Spanish linguistics, which you can use for things like finding the bad Spanish in books. That's what you can use that.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 15:27

Yeah. Were you mad at your parents when you chose your your, your majors? Were you just pissed off at your parents? And you're like, watch this.

**Kaytee Cobb** 15:35

I started as a physics education major. So I kind of just did whatever the heck I wanted. Pretty much the whole time.

**Mindy Brouse** 15:43

So So the answer is yes. The answer is yes.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 15:46

Yes. Yes.

**Kaytee Cobb** 15:48

Mary what was your major?

**Mary Heim** 15:50

I was my major was I have Family Social Science for my undergrad. And then Educational Psych and Community Counseling for my Masters.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 15:59

Makes perfect sense.

**Mindy Brouse** 16:00

You're using yours. Absolutely

**Kaytee Cobb** 16:02

I think Mary might be the smartest one here.

**Mary Heim** 16:04

No. No,

**Kaytee Cobb** 16:07

Prove me wrong.

**Mindy Brouse** 16:08

All right, Kaytee, we had a question from Rhona that I would love for all of us to answer if that's okay, guys. Have you been to the UK or other countries bookish friends are from or where they live?

**Kaytee Cobb** 16:20

I love traveling. I want to go every place. But I have been a lot of places. I'm I'm really excited to say I've been a lot of places. I've been to England, and a lot of places in Europe. So Germany, we definitely have some bookish friends there, Spain, France, Italy, etc. I've been to Australia and New Zealand. And we have some bookish friends over there. I've been to Costa Rica, Mary and Mexico. And I've been to Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina and South America. So I have stamps in my passport, which is really great. And I know that we have at least listeners from all over the world. So I love getting to know that. Like, oh, I've been there like I like you. What about you, Mary? What kind of places have you been?

**Mary Heim** 17:07

I did a semester in London when I was in college. So definitely the UK while I was across the pond. I did Italy and Germany and France. And I have also been to Costa Rica and Canada. Of course, that one's not too hard when you go to school in Minneapolis either. I'm trying to think I think that's it for me. But I am ready to add more stamps to my passport. Yeah. What about you, Meredith?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 17:39

I am woefully under traveled. And this is mostly because I spent 20 years of my adult life being completely afraid to fly. And so it wasn't until my daughter graduated from the University of Tennessee. And I absolutely had to get on a plane for the first time in more than 20 years that I kind of just began to get over that. And so now I'm doing a lot more traveling. The only country outside of the United States that I've ever been to is Canada, I've been to Vancouver, and I i actually there's a million places in Canada specifically that I would really love to visit. Interestingly, we're experiencing growth in our listenership all over the world. But we are continuing to double our growth in Canada. So we have more and more Canadian bookish friends and listeners in general than almost any other country. So we love Canada. We do love Canada. We do alright Mindy, what about you?

**Mindy Brouse** 18:34

I am I have not traveled much at all. That's a dream of mine. But that's just not been my life. I've been to Mexico. And I've been to Kenya. I don't know if we have any listeners in Kenya. But if we do Hi. And I have been to London, but I kind of don't count it even though I'd like to because it was really just like a six hour layover. And we didn't get out in the car and go look at things really quickly. But I haven't been a lot of places. I would love to go to Canada. But I I'm fully open to having a sponsor from the UK who needs me to come visit and talk about books. I'm I'm fully in for that. So if anyone needs to make that your dream to adopt Mindy for travel, I'm I'm so game.

**Kaytee Cobb** 19:22

She is suitcase size, so you can just carry and take her. Yeah, it's really easy.

**Mindy Brouse** 19:28

There you go. Perfect. Awesome. Great. Um, I didn't know that about y'all. That's fun.

**Kaytee Cobb** 19:32

It's fun. Okay, I'm up next. And so I'm going to ask all of us but starting with you, Mary, if you picked up any new pandemic hobbies, this is a question from B\_reads\_books.

**Mary Heim** 19:34

Oh, that's a good one. Okay, well, obviously, I've always painted my nails but I'd like to say that I got really good at it. Like that was where I threw my talents into learning how to get really good at painting my nails, that's for sure my pandemic hobby. I did do a little sourdough baking with a gluten free twist since I'm celiac, so that felt like a big accomplishment to figure out gluten free sourdough. It's my starter is now dead in the back of my fridge. But for a little while there, I did do some sourdough baking. What about you, Meredith? What were your pandemic hobbies, if any?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 20:17

For sure. 100% I got into plants for the first time in my life, I was always one of those people who said I can't have plants. It turned out that I really didn't, I just didn't know a couple of key things. And once I learned a couple of key things, like how to choose a plant and why light is more important than water even and how not to over water a plant. Those small, small small things have just equaled me becoming a plant mom, like you wouldn't even believe I keep saying to everybody, no more kids, no more pets. But plants are in neither one of those categories. So my house has gone from zero. I mean, I had some like fake stuff to every single place where there's good light it is covered with a plant and so and it has brought me so much joy. I absolutely love all my plants and now I'm even expanding into outdoor like I'm I'm doing more like I'm more interested in plants outside like in our backyard, and doing more planting and growing and containers out there. So that's been such a joy that the pandemic brought to me. I love watching. Mindy, what about you?

**Mindy Brouse** 21:27

I didn't think I had one. When I saw this question I was like uhhh, and then I remembered duh I started doing watercolor painting and I picked that up. Thanks to you, Kaytee and Meredith really, and Kaytee coming over and making me try one because I was too scared to try one. And I love it. I haven't been doing it as much recently I kind of got distracted from some things. But I've loved doing that during the pandemic with my kids or with friends or just by myself. It's very relaxing when I can put my type oneness or whatever, outside somehow and lock her outside and just enjoy it. So that's been that's been really fun. Kaytee, how about you? What What did you pick up during the pandemic other than COVID?

**Kaytee Cobb 22:10**

I did do that as well. I kind of lost my mind during the pandemic. I could list a lot of things that I at least tried once. Like, I did some embroidery. I did some bread baking Mary, of course, you know, Mindy, and I paint a lot together. So I love doing watercolor. I've always been a puzzler. So I got really good at it during the pandemic. I was doing puzzles with Shad when he was here a few weeks ago, and he thinks I'm like a Rain Man puzzler because, because of how quickly I can put pieces in. And I would say the biggest new thing that I really got into was my spin bike. I love my spin bike. I've passed 200 workouts. I work out six to seven days a week, and it is what keeps me grounded, and level. And I do think it's very much a pandemic hobby like other people. How many people bought like Peloton, echelons and all the things this year, but I love mine. So I'm a total addict to my mix. That's the one that I ended up getting. It's my favorite pandemic hobby.

**Mary Heim 23:13**

So many good ones. Okay, this is gonna be a Meredith specific question. And I love this. This is from Holly. Meredith, What's the weirdest book you have ever read?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 23:23**

The weirdest book I've ever read for sure, hands down is The Library at Mount Char. There's no question and what's it's so the book is really weird. And it's weird that I liked it so much. Because I normally don't like weird anything. I don't like weird TV. I don't like weird movies I don't like it's just not that I really I shy away from anything that could be described that way. But The Library at Mount Char by Scott Hawkins is so deeply, deeply strange. And yet it is completely memorable. I've pressed it into some reader, not everybody, because it's definitely not for everybody. But for the people that I think it kind of fits with. It really, really, really has fit and it's become a real favorite for them. So yeah, I love that one.

**Kaytee Cobb 24:11**

Such a weird book, though.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 24:14**

Oh, it's so deeply strange. One question I'd love to have us all answer is in this question that I get a lot. Because of what we do, we we each read a lot, right? So how does your significant other... How do they feel about the fact that you have to read a lot to do what you do? Like, do you argue about it? Or is your significant other like, Oh, you know what, I'm totally good with it. How do you manage that? Mindy?

**Mindy Brouse 24:39**

That is a great question. And that has been a heated topic in the Brouse house at time. So when I first started reading again, thanks to y'all in the show, It was fine. He was excited for me. But then I kept picking up the pace. And I think there was one time I read 34 books in a month and he was "This is not normal, or you need to stop". I was like Why? So we've had some conversations. And then as a part of the show, he has been very supportive of me being on with you guys when I am and really encouraging when I'm prepping, like, he's really all in like the week before two weeks before when I'm, you know, looking at what I want to maybe read, or maybe talk about. And, but on a daily basis, it's a little bit more

of a struggle for us. So we've had to have conversations about that. And I have toned back my reading a little bit to give him that space in my family, this space to show that I'm engaged with them. And I, I still would die on that hill that I'm plenty engaged. But Paul doesn't see that, right. So he doesn't see that, that time during the day those interactions. So I, I'm better about making sure I have a lot of face to face time before I pick up a book or put the earbuds in. But that's a, I think it has been a challenge to find the balance for me personally, because I am very much an all or nothing kind of person. And I'm an extremist by nature. So if I'm going to read a lot, I'm going to read a lot, and I'm not going to do other things. So that has had to be a conversation. I think it's helped us in a lot of ways. Because it's given us good conversation about why do I read and what hobbies here the kids enjoy doing? And I don't, you know, I I don't want to sit and watch TV anymore. Like that has become practically non existent in my life. I don't enjoy it anymore. So I just don't do it, really. And so they've understood me a little bit more how often they were asking me to watch. And I'm like, I think it's been good for all of us. What about you, Kaytee?

**Kaytee Cobb 26:47**

We also have some ebb and flow in our house as far as what how much reading is too much. Right? When I first got back into reading, and really started going gung ho and started hitting 100, 150 books a year, Jason was like, "You never want to hang out with me. You don't want to do anything I do". Same same conversations. Why don't we want to watch TV together? Eventually, it turned to the podcast and being able to say that, well, now this is my job, which is fantastic. And Jason, you know, when we first started the podcast, it's a crapshoot. You don't know what's gonna happen with it, we we always said we'd be happy with 10 listeners, and there was a possibility, we would only have 10 listeners. And so then it was like, Well, now you're like spending time on this and doing all these things for a podcast, and who knows if it's even gonna go anywhere. Let me tell you what, now Jason is Currently Reading's biggest cheerleader. He asked me to get business cards made, because he talks about the podcast so much to people he meets at the office and his patients and all kinds of people. And he will tell people like, Oh, you got to meet my wife, she read over 300 books last year, like he's just he's very cheerleadery about my reading, and the podcast and all of it, which has been such a great refreshing change. So when I say, you know, I don't want to watch that show with you. But I'm gonna sit here on the couch and read with you. He's totally happy with that. Now, he has no problem whatsoever, with me choosing reading over that, especially if I'm still willing to be close to him and do so because that is more important to him than actually engaging together on the same thing.

**Mindy Brouse 28:21**

So I have a question to follow that up Kaytee. Meredith, can you do that? Because I, that has been part of the issue with Paul is I can't sit while he's watching a show. And I can't sit there and read because of the auditory input. And I can't I can't do that. Are you able to do that Meredith?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 28:39**

It depends on the book. It can be really, really hard for me. So depending on the book, sometimes it's such where I can. And so I tried to take advantage of that. But one of the things, because I mean, there's no question that we've had to kind of navigate this because of course, even before I took on the podcast, I have a job that's way more than 40 hours a week. And so I was already working in the evenings, but I'd be on my laptop sitting next to him. And most of the time, I would save the work that I

could do at night like in front of the TV. So that really wasn't a problem. And so when I then had the addition of the podcast itself, and all the reading, like my reading level needed to ramp up to, you know, to keep up with the podcast, there's no question that we had to have some discussions about, mean needing to have more time to read, which equals time that I'm not being interrupted all the time over and over, you know, because I can't get into a flow if every 10 seconds I'm being asked to look at something on a screen or respond to something. So we had to have some discussions around that. One of the things that we did that actually solved this problem was that Johnny likes to be on his iPad on various you know, he's so he's like on his iPad in the evening looking at various things. And I'm either working or reading. And what he wanted to do was to also have the TV going, this was just kind of a habit. What I realized is, he doesn't actually need the show because Johnny is actually really not into TV any more than I am. So I started putting on ASMR rooms as we would come into the evening. So we use an ASMR room where we do our reading time as a family, I just started not turning that off. And what I realized is having that little bit of noise in the background, as Jackson goes up and goes to bed, and we're left in the living room, was enough that I could no read with no problem, because I'm not having that competing audio input. But he doesn't feel like we're sitting in silence, which was what was making him uncomfortable. So more night, about five nights a week now, at this point, we actually aren't turning on the TV at all. Now we did just recently watch Mare of Easttown, which we binged and we almost never do that. So that had both of us putting all our devices down, because we were so into that show. It was so so good. But other than that, most nights, yeah, we're not turning on the TV at all. And that has really helped with my evening time reading. I love that Mary would, what is your, how do you deal with this in your house?

### **Mary Heim 31:11**

You know, a lot of what you said Meredith is not dissimilar to what we've kind of figured out. And I think some of it too, is that I think Jeremy has been really, he's like seeing my reading time as a good reason for him to get motivated to like, Oh, go go do something else, aside from just like watching TV. So usually, we do like to put Charlotte to bed and the night with like a show to kind of just sit and flop and like be exhausted. And then after that is when I'll pick up my book. And I too, cannot really depending on circumstances, will have something on a show on TV and read at the same time. But occasionally, we'll put on an ASMR room, or I'll get up and just go one room over. Or it's been a great opportunity for Jeremy to be like, Oh, I'm going to go down to the workshop, I'm going to go do some I'm going to grab my wood carving, or I'm going to work on some coding stuff. And he has used that as an opportunity for him to get back into some of his hobbies. I think that probably both of us lost a little bit since becoming new parents. So it's been a good motivator for us both to carve out time for ourselves. And we do like to be you know, in proximity, he likes to be in the same room. And I like that too. And it's nice to have it have been like a little healthy nudge, a healthy push to not just have endless TV on in the background. But instead of like, okay, we've recalibrated after the toddler is asleep. Now we're going to go do something with our night and mine is going to be a book and his is going to be something else. And occasionally it is a book as well. It's always fun, when he's super into something and just wants to read for three hours before we go to sleep to that's really fun to like co read together with a little cozy ASMR in the background. So yeah, I think it's like a little bit of something that each of you said resonated for me. So

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 33:04

Yeah. Well, to follow on with that... So one of the things that we have found by instituting our 20 minutes of reading time as a family, there's been many, many, many things that have been great about that. One of the most surprising things is how often, Johnny will even after we kind of cut Jackson loose, he will want to because now he's reading he's got his Kindle in front of him, he will want to continue reading so he has even mentioned, you know, if I wasn't picking up my book at that time of the evening, I might not naturally gravitate it, gravitate to it, but because it's right there. So he's making way more progress in his reading in the evenings because of that. So it's just another one of those benefits that we found from establishing that habit.

**Mindy Brouse** 33:47

I love that. I love that. I love hearing about that from y'all. That's a great question. Okay, Kaytee, I have a question for you from Jacqueline. If you could host a different podcast that is not bookish, adjacent or bookish. What would it be about?

**Kaytee Cobb** 34:03

That one that is hard for me. There are not very many things I can talk about. As much as I can talk about books, especially if we're talking about a continuing podcast. Like I really loved doing some of the one off minisodes that we've had, or being on Bookend Homeschoolers with you, Mindy, and being able to talk about homeschooling and diversity. And, you know, we just passed the year anniversary of the the interview I did with January LaVoy and the white allyship minisode. I loved those conversations. But I'm also you know, a white lady, and it's not my space to take up either. So I don't, I don't have another thing I would love to talk about as much as I love talking about reading. The only thing I can come up with is, is a girlfriend chat show like Sorta Awesome. But I can't do that because Meg is already doing that. And she's amazing at it. You know? So I'm not doing that. But I would love to be able to know that once a week I get to chat with my best friend when, you know talk about anything under the sun and that people want to listen to it. So that's that's the little itch that the COVIDeos scratch for me, so it works out. Okay. What about you, Mary? If you were going to talk about something else on a podcast?

**Mary Heim** 35:19

Oh, boy, I mean, you, you made a really solid point, Kaytee, that I don't know if there's anything that I could talk at length, about as much as I could talk about books. I probably feel like I will, could ramble on and this would be so very niche, but about, you know, the importance of like therapy and self reflection and kind of like, pop psych. digging into that a little bit more, I think that would be really fun. I think as it crosses over with this, like, body acceptance and body positivity and kind of, you know, releasing some of the mentality around movement or food as restriction and, you know, dipping into movement and food in a joyful way. All of that could probably tie together under that umbrella of my former life really is like a practicing therapist. So maybe that's what I could talk about, but I probably peter out a lot more quickly, but I did if it were about books. I love this. I want to know, Meredith, I want to know Mindy, what about you?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 36:23

I would do Meredith After Dark. For sure. I think I could definitely do a podcast that's about sex and sex positivity and sex and middle marriage and middle marriage in general. And kind of all of all of that stuff,

it would definitely have an E rating for sure. But I think I think that would be super fun. And Mindy, I have an idea of what podcasts you might do.

**Kaytee Cobb** 36:51

Remember, when we made you start a podcast?

**Mindy Brouse** 36:53

You remember that? When I should have said that? What did you pick up during the pandemic? What hobby? Well, my close friends made me start a podcast during the pandemic?

**Mary Heim** 37:04

Maybe this answer is real. So

**Mindy Brouse** 37:05

Yeah, the homeschooling one that one I can talk about super easily, it's fun. But I was trying to, I didn't think actually we were going to all if it could be something else. It really just would be girlfriend chat. But every you know, every week kind of be leaning towards like some kind of parenting, probably or older, middle life thing, because I feel like something I definitely have learned in the last year is nobody's talking about the things I've been going through and the things that are really important for women in their late 40s and 50s. And I feel like that needs to be talked about. And I feel like it could be a really fun conversation. You know, like, it could be hilarious, but also informative and be like, hey, let me let me just warn you what's coming, and we could sit around it. Kaytee and Mary could go great, Meredith and Mindy thanks for that heads up. We're super excited about that, or whatever. But

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 38:07

I was gonna say I think it would be fascinating Mindy for you and I to do Meredith and Mindy afterdark. I think there would just be a lot. Oh, my God, a lot of potential topics and conversation that you and I could have together. I think we could really grow. We could grow together,

**Mindy Brouse** 38:23

it would be, it would it definitely show both ends of the spectrum on some things and be absolutely freaking hilarious. So yeah,

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 38:32

I would it was but but I do want to say Mindy, I think you're completely right. On a very serious level that there is a real hole in the market for a podcast for women who are where we are in our lives. Because man there's so much to talk about that is not being discussed as much, or as well or as deeply as I think it should be. So that's, that's a fan. That's actually, I'm actually I'm going to ask you to go ahead and create that podcast because thanks for Yeah,

**Mary Heim** 38:59

I'd listen to that. My enneagram six wants to know what's coming. Prepare me so that I can prepare.



**Mindy Brouse** 39:05

I already know that my first guest will be Meredith. So that'll be perfect.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 39:09

Oh, I am raising my hands so high. You can't even you can't even imagine. I'm actually going to do something just a little bit different. I'm going to ask a question of Kaytee, because we got a lot of questions about the Indie Press List, which is definitely I mean, that was our pandemic hobby that we took on this year. Right? That was one of the new things that we came that we came up with this year that we're so excited about. One of the questions that we got a lot of Kaytee is have we ever had The Indie Press bookshop suggest a book for the list that we wanted to decline or hated? Kaytee, how do we handle it in that situation?

**Kaytee Cobb** 39:49

Well, this is this is kind of two questions. One is, have there been books on the Indie Press List that everybody got to hear that we ended up hating and I do have an answer for that. I hated *Over The Woodward Wall*. I threw that sucker against the wall so hard, I was so mad at the end of that book. But I was really excited about it, which is how I ended up on the Indie Press List. So the bookstores will send us a list. Usually it's we call it like the draft list of five that they think they want to link to. And Meredith, and I then go off that email chain. And we chat with each other about them. And we say, you know, what, privately, just

**Kaytee Cobb** 40:24

right, what's coming up in the year? What's coming up, you know? Is it spring, summer fall? What's happening in the world right now? Do we need some heavy? Do we need some light and we kind of, without saying, make this a list for Meredith and Kaytee, we turn it into something that we think would be a good fit for the time that we're in, right. And for the group in specific how we work closely with that. And we have gone back to both bookstores so far and said, we really think one of these two or two of these five, probably should get swapped out for something different. Do you have anything to add to that Meredith?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 40:27

you and me,

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 41:02

Yeah, I mean, I think absolutely to everything that you just said. And also, we I think a couple times, we've had to knock something out of the list simply because we felt like it was a book that a lot of people were already talking about. And we're really trying to bring books to the Indie Press List that are new kind of either backlist or just ones that haven't gotten as much promo everywhere. So if there's been a couple of times where we've knocked books out for that reason, but what we don't do, or what we try really hard not to do is to like you said, We're not trying to make this a list. That is what Kaytee and Meredith want to read in specific, we want it to be a list that we feel serves the bookish friends, our Patreon subscribers, we want we want it to serve that group in general. So there might be there almost every month, if we're doing it right, there's going to be a couple books that really appealed to us. And a couple books that are like, I can really see how there are going to be a lot of our readers who want this

book, it might not be super my cup of tea. But then sometimes even those surprises and they end up being really big hits for the you know, the one of us that was like, This is not my cup of tea kind of books. So, so yes, we do really want the bookstore to have agency in making their picks, we want those picks to come from the bookstore. But we massage just a little bit to make sure that that list is as strong as it can possibly be for our because nobody knows the group like we do. Right, right. So that's for that reason, you know, we do that.

**Kaytee Cobb** 42:28

Do you have any spicy takes on any of the books that have made it onto the list? I already know the answer to this Meredith Sia Martinez

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 42:37

Okay, yeah, I mean, I, right and yet I saw that for, for a large swath of readers, it could be really, really right for them. So I know myself as a reader enough to say, look, the reason that didn't work for me, that particular book was not because it wasn't good. It was because I just don't like teenagers. And this one was really teenage heavy, like it was very focused on, like, super angsty teen. And that's just not my, that's not what I love. It's, but for a lot of people, that's why they love YA so much. And so for that reason, it stayed on the list. And it should it should, right,

**Kaytee Cobb** 43:14

Mary and Mindy, as you've listened to the the Indie Press List, do you have any spicy opinions about any of those books, because I know Mary has one.

**Mary Heim** 43:24

I do. And I'm struggling, I can see the cover. And I'm like frantically flipping to try and find the name. When the most recent episode, if you're wild, if I do What Should Be Wild, I made it 70% into that book, which is unheard of for a DNF. For me, typically, if I'm in a DNF, it's going to be before 50% or well before 50%. I made it through 70% of that book, and I thought what am I doing? What am I doing here? This is not for me, this is not a Mary book. I need to just let it go. And I let it go. And that I think is the only one I mean, in the press list that I have a spicy take on. So many others have been hits. But who that was not a Mary book.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 44:04

Let me jump in with another question that I think people would love to hear the answer to. So a lot of times on the show, one of us will bring a book I've certainly raise my hand in this category, where we are absolutely raving about a particular book. My most recent one was Project Hail Mary, as an example here, where I go on the show and just say, look, I think everyone should read this book, like just a book that really falls into that category of you know, everyone's going to love it. And then one of the things that happens is in the bookish friends Facebook group, oftentimes, because spicy opinions strong opinions are welcome and they are so welcome. We really, really really believe this to be true. Someone will say I'm reading let's say Project Hail Mary and I am you know 35% in and I can't get any further What should I do or is it just me but I hated that book kind of thing. So I personally love it when that happens. But I want to know really and truly, when you bring a book Mindy, I'm going to start with

you when you bring a book to the show that you absolutely love and then in the Facebook group, somebody says it's not for me, how do you how do you deal with it?

**Mindy Brouse 45:13**

I hate it.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 45:17**

Good, honest answer. That's an honest answer.

**Mindy Brouse 45:21**

Okay, yeah, I just hate it. But I really do believe deep down that we all have reasons. And I really have landed really hard on timing, especially for a book. And I have learned that and I think, honestly, I'm not sure I would have learned it if I hadn't been a sub host. I don't know that I would have really fully embraced that. But because of knowing you guys, and trusting you and having conversations regularly with you about books, and because you know me, and because of that relationship, I really do believe in my heart of hearts that I might not have loved a book, but it could have been about timing. And it could have been what I was going through right then like, honestly, there's some books that I have not like during these last two years. And I haven't been in a really healthy place emotionally, a lot of these months in these last two years for me. And so I do give that space to say, you know what, it could be that. So when I say I hate it, I also mean that I'm like, well, you're probably not doing well right now. And that's why...

**Kaytee Cobb 46:40**

She thinks you're mentally unhealthy and they don't like her books.

**Mindy Brouse 46:44**

So I do take it personally. But that is, again, because my prob... one of my problems, and I know it's a problem. I am an author's dream. These books become real to me. They, they are real people. They are real things. And so if somebody doesn't like Ryland Grace, I take offense at that, because he's my best friend now. And if somebody doesn't like Harry in Harry's Trees, that's offensive, because he's my best friend. So I if I really rave about a book, it's very hard for me. But I am growing thanks to you. And I do give that space. I mean, I'm just being honest. I do walk over into a corner and have a little little sad time. And then I come back to the big girl table. And I take it like a big girl.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 47:34**

Kaytee, what about you? What do you, what do you think when you see you see that thread getting started on the bookish friends group?

**Kaytee Cobb 47:40**

I love it. I am becoming more and more argumentative. I think my eight wing has gotten super healthy over this past like year you're not eight wing, my eight arrow, has gotten super healthy, or this past two years. And I used to I used to take it personally like when I was just posting on Instagram or when I had a blog. And now I'm just like, yes, let's talk about it. I want to argue with you. I even I even messaged Mary right after your most recent episode. And I said, I wish I got to record that with you so that we

could have argued about People You Meet on Vacation because I really did not like that book. And and I really wanted to argue with her about it on air. So everybody cuz I think people love that they love hearing that we have different opinions too like when Meredith and I talked about Nina Hill. They're like, or Untamed. That was another one that we had very different opinions on. And it's okay to disagree. And I kind of love it. Like I love it when Stacey Chin comes at me and she's like, I liked this book. But I'm probably gonna take it down a star because everybody else likes it. And I'm like, Alright, Stacey, you do you. Let's argue about it. I just love it. I love it. Now. It's my eight arrow, I'm sure of it.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 48:49

Mary has has this happened to you? What do you think when this happens?

**Mary Heim** 48:53

So I will say now y'all know, this isn't my my first, I had a brief foray into bookish social media kind of large book groups in a past life. So I think I was a lot more sensitive back then. And I've developed a thicker skin since then, when somebody doesn't like a book that I have loved. I used to get very sad or not defensive, like internally defensive of like, how could we not and now I recognize that not every book is for every person and I can "bless and release" and I think some of that has me growing as a person and a reader and developing that thick skin and also maybe some of my therapist mode coming in to just be able to shut off that part of my brain of like, this is for you. This doesn't have to be for me, but I did. I had to grow from a place of not getting super bummed out whenever somebody didn't love or actively, you know, didn't adore a book that I adored. I don't have any connection to any eight wing ever though. I would never I feel like Kaytee your desire to want to get all charged up and fight about not fight about it, but like, let's have a discussion. Yeah, she wants to fight. I don't have that. I don't have that in me anywhere. I'm like, okay, that's fine. It's not for you goodbye. I'm gonna go find my club of fellow book lovers. I'll sick Kaytee on them if Yeah,

**Kaytee Cobb** 50:17

I love that too.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 50:19

And I have zero desire to fight about it or argue about it, because I just know they're wrong. So there's like, I have just like an assurance in the middle of my soul that at some point, they'll realize that my opinion is yes.

**Mindy Brouse** 50:37

Meredith, I love that about you.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 50:38

Yeah, right. Not really. But also Yes, that's true. But But as far as the discussion goes, I you know, that's sort of tongue in cheek because yes, we all agree. And we all have said that it's so great that the bookish friends group is a safe space for people to start those discussions and to know that we legitimately are not going to be angry about it or you know, that we don't have that kind of like emotional hold on a book because right books come at different times. They land in different ways. And at some point, a book that is not right for someone is very likely to be really right for them later on. So I love

what you said, Mary, and I'm probably going to be repeating that - "bless and release". I think that that's, I need that tattooed on my forehead.

**Kaytee Cobb** 51:22

I don't think that should be your first tattoo Meredith.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 51:25

On my forehead, you don't think so?

**Kaytee Cobb** 51:27

It should just be the universally rethought.

**Mary Heim** 51:28

face tattoo shouldn't be number one?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 51:31

It would be a really, it would be a big surprise. It would shock everybody if I got a forehead tattoo. I don't think anyone would see that coming,

**Kaytee Cobb** 51:38

I think glow in the dark ink so that you could always, when the lights go off.

**Mary Heim** 51:43

Oh my. At a rave!...

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 51:46

Well, there's an episode of Meredith After Dark. What would my glow in the dark tattoo be. I love that. Alright, guys, I think we have answered a lot of really, really good questions. I'm so glad that you guys were able to join us for this episode, because there's no question that you made it, You made it a lot more interesting.

**Mindy Brouse** 52:10

Thanks for having us. We love being here.

**Mary Heim** 52:12

This was so fun. Yeah. Thank you for having us.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 52:14

Alright, that is it for this week. As a reminder, here's where you can connect with us. You can find me on Meredith at @Meredith.reads on Instagram.

**Kaytee Cobb** 52:22

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

**Mary Heim** 52:25

And you can find me Mary at @Maryreadsandsips on Instagram.

**Mindy Brouse** 52:30

And you can find me Mindy at @gratefulforgrace on Instagram,

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 52:33

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** 52:43

Yes, you can also email us directly at [currentlyreadingpodcast@gmail.com](mailto:currentlyreadingpodcast@gmail.com) or contact us directly at [currentlyreadingpodcast](https://www.instagram.com/currentlyreadingpodcast) on Instagram.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 52:51

And if you really want to help us but more importantly, if you really want to be involved in the bookish friends group on Facebook, or the indie press list or all the other good things that we have going on become a patreon supporter for just \$5 a month. You can also rate and review us on Apple podcasts and shout us out on social media. All of those things make a huge difference towards us finding our perfect audience.

**Kaytee Cobb** 53:13

Yep, your recommendations your shares your Patreon support your love of us all over the internet are helping us grow and get closer to our goals. Thanks for doing that.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 53:22

All right, until next week, happy reading. Happy reading happy reading friends.

**Mindy Brouse** 53:27

Happy reading

**Mindy Brouse** 54:21

Hey, can we do my Instagram handle again? You can find Mindy at [@don'tfistmybump.com](https://www.instagram.com/dontfistmybump.com)

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 54:30

You're gonna do a whole website. It's not even just me. It's you're going whole hog my bump ever. Just don't do it.