



Season 3, Episode 16: Election Reading + Endings that Make or Break a Book

Mon, November 16, 2020 • 44:00

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 already know, we won't shy away from having strong opinions. So get ready.

Kaytee Cobb 00:24

We are light on the chit-chat 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 where I'm from, reading by the pool in November is a thing.

Kaytee Cobb 00:43

And I'm Kaytee Cobb. A homeschooling mom of four living in New Mexico. And the election broke my reading this week. This is episode number 16 of season three. And we're so glad you're here.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 00:54

Yeah, it's a week. It's been a week, Kaytee.

Kaytee Cobb 00:57

Yeah, we thought that it might be good to kind of stamp this moment in time because things change rapidly. And right now they're changing a lot. So today is Saturday, November 7, and we have a new Presidentelect in the United States. And that might show up in our voices today. Or it might show up in the comments we make. But either way, we just wanted to let people know where we're at. Right this second. So with that being said, let's talk about bookish moments of the week. What's your bookish moment?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 01:27

All right. Yes, I am. I am glad that you timestamp it because we just literally kind of got the call got the news a couple of hours ago. So you and I are still processing it. And it's interesting, because my bookish moment of the week I had already planned. The good news is my pool is done. We've been talking for the last couple of months, especially in CoVideos over the fact that we Johnny and I built a

pool, which has been a long and arduous process. We're grateful to do it. And it's turned out really, really well. One of the reasons I've been excited about the pool is because I really wanted a space outside to be able to read, because it's something I love to do. We all do, right? To read outside, especially in the early morning is great, so I have that space. But the bad news, Kaytee, and you understand this better than anybody. My reading has also been broken this last week. Since Monday of last week. I started a book last Monday, I just finished it this morning, but it was a slog, and not because the book wasn't great. I just have had a really hard time concentrating. Words with just run together. And I just found myself putting down my book and picking up my phone constantly refreshing my social media feed to see if we had gotten any election results. So not a great bookish moment of the week. But it is you know, it is the state of thing. So state of this past week.

Kaytee Cobb 02:47

Well, you finished it. Good job. You got a little round of applause right now. Good job.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 02:52

I finished it. But yeah, you and I both know one book in a week, even for me is very, very, very slow.

Kaytee Cobb 02:59

Yes, I also had basically a freeze from Monday to this morning, I finished a book that I had slowly plodded through on audio, which on audio for me to go slow. That's ridiculous. So my bookish moment though, is last week in real time, we released an episode about cookbooks. And I storied about some of the cookbooks that we really like around our house and mentioned that I have a problem with holding books open that like books that want to close, especially cookbooks because you have to be able to look at the page while your hands are messy. Really make me a little bonkers. So our listener, Chrissie reached out to me, and she let me know about the book bone, which is I swear something I've been looking for my entire life. I ordered it immediately as soon as she messaged me, and I got it. And it's amazing. It's exactly what I wanted. So it's like two little weights that are basically joined by a rubbery silicone piece of rubber that you can set on your book to hold it open. And because it's silicone, it doesn't just slide off or whatever. And it will hold it open for you. So you can read-hands free if you have other stuff going on. So while I wasn't reading this week, my book was displayed open beautifully. With my book bone, it was so special. So I'm really grateful to Chrissie that she helped me you know, have my book open while I wasn't reading it. That was really great of her.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 04:18

That sounds really useful. So I'm assuming this is something that you're gonna put in show notes so we can all get ourselves a book bone.

Kaytee Cobb 04:24

Everybody needs a book bone. And I mean, I mean that in every way today. So.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 04:29

In the best way possible. Exactly. Yes.

Kaytee Cobb 04:33

Yes. Let's talk about current reads, shall we?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 04:36

All right, Kaytee. My first book this week is a Mindy made me do it. But which, as soon as I heard her talk about this book on the show, it just sounded so completely up my alley, and I am so glad that I listened to her because it was really, really great. I read Just One Damn Thing After Another by Jodi Taylor. Mindy raved about this on the show. So I'm not going to go into great detail on the setup. But just want to remind you so our setting is the St. Mary's Institute of Historical Research. And then the outside it looks like this staid old research institution. But inside, there are things happening, that most people don't know about, and that are absolutely groundbreaking in that they have figured out a way to send historians back in time to properly and accurately observe history so that they can make sure that they're absolutely getting it right, because they're actually watching it unfold. So, they go, they have figured out how to go back in time. We're following our lead character is Madeline Maxwell, and she is the person who we see the institute through the eyes of and so we meet her, we meet all of her teammates, and we get to go back in time, from 11th century London to World War One, all the way back to the Cretaceous period. And then even to the destruction of the great library at Alexandria. This book is a wild wild ride. This book is so much fun, I laughed out loud multiple times, because the dialogue is just really funny. But if you love history in your books, if you'd like to learn something, while you're also reading a really plot driven novel, this is going to be the book for you. It was just so much fun. Now, I do like the time travel element of things. And this definitely comes into play, especially if you're interested in like, what would it be like if we really figured out like very in a very dialed in way, how to travel back in time, what would that actually look like? What would it feel like? This book is for you. I loved it. It's a part of a series and I know several people who have read the first book have sped, including Mindy have sped through the entire series. So if you love this one, you're gonna have a lot more where that came from. And I highly recommend it. This is Just One Damned Thing After Another by Jodi Taylor.

Kaytee Cobb 06:59

That's also the theme of the week that we just went through. So done and done.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 07:03

Perfect, perfect.

Kaytee Cobb 07:06

Okay, my first book this week is called The Only Good Indians by Stephen Graham Jones. This is horror, written by a Native American author from the Blackfeet Nation. And it was exactly what I needed in October when we were doing like outdoor cleanup around the house, because you're very, you know, you're outside and the wilderness. Creeped me the frick out. It's amazing. So our main characters are four Native American men also from the Blackfeet Nation who have been friends since childhood. The setup online and in the blurb on the book is really minimal. And I think that's the way that you want to go into this. So I'm not going to give a ton of setup. I, I listened to this one on audio from Libro FM because they had sent me an ALC a few months ago. And again, I'll link in the show notes how you get started on the ALC program, because we always get lots of questions about that. It

finally called me to pick it up on this dreary October day, and it's perfect. So these four characters revisit an event in childhood, and someone or something that cannot let that event go. The tension takes a little while to build and quite a few of the reviews on Goodreads were like "eh, I DNFed that after that 15% or 20%," because you're kind of getting your feet under you trying to figure out what's going on in this book. But once you get into part two, it gets gory and violent. And then so outside the realm of possibility that feels like you're in a fever dream, like what has actually happened to me. There's sweat lodges involved and you kind of feel like you're out there like, Am I hallucinating from the sweat and the heat in the sweat lodge like it's very atmospheric it takes you right into the story does not want to let you go. November is National Native American Heritage Month in the United States. So this is a great one to pick up, especially now because it takes place the week before Thanksgiving, which is a week, you know, this coming week for when this episode releases. So if you love to read books that you open the first page and you're like, Oh my gosh, that's today. Today, pick it up today. So that one, again, reviews a little bit mixed, because it takes some time to get your feet under you. But it was exactly what I needed at the time. It's *The Only Good Indians* by Stephen Graham Jones.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 09:21

I've been hearing lots of great things about this one, I've been on hold with it with my library for a while now. So I'm hoping it's going to come in soon. And it's useful to know to kind of hang on if the first you know, little bit is a little bit slow. I always enjoy knowing that like push through that because it's going to work out so that's Yeah, that's really good to know. Okay.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 09:41

All right. This next book I read is something a little bit different. So I read *The Warehouse* by Rob Hart. So this is dystopian. It's kind of interesting. So our lead character is Paxton. Now first of all, my son's name is Paxton and you don't run into Paxtons in books very often. So it was kind of fun unless I've actually read Paxton as a girl. But in this case, it was there was like a 20-something boy named Paxton. So he's our lead character. He's down on his luck. He has very, very few options for work in this dystopian, near future dystopian society that the book takes place in. And he finally decides that his best option is to take a job with Cloud, which is this giant tech company that has basically taken over all of the American economy. And when you take a job with Cloud, you also live there. So it basically becomes your entire life. But compared to what's left outside of the cloud, which is basically an economy completely ravaged and depressed, the Cloud's landscape inside of gleaming entertainment halls and open plan offices and vast warehouses doesn't seem so bad. In this world, it's actually your best option.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 10:54

So our other character is Zinnia. And she has been tasked by an identified group to infiltrate Cloud. But now that she's undercover, and inside the walls, she realizes that she's risking everything, including her life, to ferret out the darkest secrets of this company. So as the truth about the cloud unfolds, Zinnia and Paxson both realize that things at Cloud are not at all what they seem, and in fact, are a lot worse than anyone thought. And things become dangerous for them, and for the entire world. So this this book is, is interesting, it's really, really interesting book. It's, the cloud is basically in this particular book. It's Amazon and Walmart morph together and it's run by this man, that's basically this combination, Warren Buffett, Steve Jobs, character. If you can kind of imagine a combination of those two

personalities kind of older and folksy, but also brilliant and, you know, capable of anything. This book is good. It has a really really strong point of view. It reminded me of the Dave Eggers book *The Circle*. If you read that one reminded me a lot of that when in that it's it like it really pounds you over the head with its anti-trust kind of leanings. I mean, we have no choice but to have one very particular point of view as we read this book, right. And I'm not a fan of books that feel like they're forcing me to think a certain thing I want to come to that on my own. So I found this one to be a little heavy-handed. The vibe is definitely *The Circle* mixed with *Handmaid's Tale*. It's definitely got that depressing, dystopian, we've lost our way kind of vibe is super interesting. I'm glad I finished it. But I needed to finish it quickly, because I didn't want to spend a lot of time in this particular world. So that was *The Warehouse* by Rob Hart.

Kaytee Cobb 12:58

And is this is this something that your Paxton would want to read? Because I love doing that to people like giving them a book that their name is featured in?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 13:07

Yeah, I can definitely see my Paxton wanting to read it mostly because Paxton's in the middle of college, right? So he's, he's a junior in college, and he just spent two years working at Target. So there's, there's some also some Target-y kind of things in the in the warehouse. So I think he would find it interesting. So yeah, that would be a good recommendation for him. Nice. I like that.

Kaytee Cobb 13:30

Okay, my next book is called *Dear Justyce* by Nic Stone. And this is the sequel to *Dear Martin*, which I loved when I read it. So I had pre ordered *Dear Justyce* for when it came out. And then I finished it, the day it showed up at my house. There are events from the first book that show up in the second one. So I do definitely recommend reading them in order. And even better if you read them kind of close together so that you have a really good handle on who the characters are. Because Nic doesn't spend a lot of time reintroducing us to the characters and the events of the first book. She's not rehashing it for us, which I really appreciate. You know. *Justyce* was our main character and *Dear Martin*, and his story is kind of interlaced with his letters to Martin Luther King Jr. in his journal, where he's just kind of, that's how he processes the events that are going on around him. And in this follow up, we have Quan as our main character who is writing to *Justyce* from prison, where he is awaiting trial in the shooting death of a police officer. And once a young Black boy as part of the system, it's very hard for him to claw his way out and very hard to like, untangle everything that led him there. Nic posted on her Instagram on the day of this book's release that it was the hardest thing she's ever written, and the author's note in this completely convinces you of that fact, totally eviscerated me in the best way possible. Of course, you know how I love to cry. This book will show you all the faults and the intricacies of the criminal justice system and how it's how it's stacked against young Black men. Especially in a way that makes things really approachable for young people and adults alike. It's incredible. It's so worth your time. It's not a long read, but it's really powerful. Please pick it up. It's so good. It's *Dear Justyce* by Nic Stone. And I have like a super author crush on her.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 15:15

All right, my third book this week is my five star book of today's show. And I absolutely love this book so much. So this book is *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig. And I think all of us hosts have read it now. And we've all really really loved it. This book is so good, you guys, this is my just right now everyone needs to open up your bookshop on your computer and get ready to purchase because this one is so good. So in this story, basically, the idea is that there is a library in the universe. And in this library, there are an infinite number of books that tell different versions of the story of your life based on different choices that you could make. And so, one book tells the story of your life as it is, along with another book for the life you could have lived if you'd made x choice or y choice. So in the midnight library, we meet our lead character who's Nora, and she finds herself at a really tough junction of her life as we meet her at the beginning of the story. And she's given the chance to see if her life would have been better if she could live another version of it. Faced with the possibility of changing her life for a new one, like following a different career. Maybe not breaking up with that boyfriend that she broke up with. She has to search as she travels through the midnight library to decide what truly makes a fulfilling life. Just to answer that question, what makes a good life? This book is amazing. So if you're if this is sounding vaguely familiar to you, a lot of people resonated with my description of it on Instagram, which was that I felt that this was like if *Dark Matter* had been written by Jenny Colgan. And I stand by that description. Because so many people have said, That's exactly right. That's, that's, that's what it's about. This book gave me so much to chew on. I have thought about the concept, I thought about Nora, I thought about the concept of all the different versions of our lives that could exist out there. And is the one I'm living right now, truly the best one, can I make changes within this life that can change its course even while I'm in the midst of living it. This book just gave me so much to think about it was interesting all the way through. I do want to say trigger warning for suicide and suicidal ideation. So definitely be aware of that, especially at the very beginning. But I also want to say this is one of the most hopeful, redemptive books that I've read in a really, really long time. So it starts out in a rough spot with Nora but hold on, because it's going to be it's going to be okay, so, five star book, I highly recommend it. This is one of those I would put into the hands of most readers and feel very confident it was going to be a great choice. This is *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig.

Kaytee Cobb 18:22

I also loved it. And I also gave it five stars. So whether you're a Meredith booktwin, or a Kaytee booktwin, or a Mindy booktwin, who also gave it five stars, and I don't know, Mary's rating right now, but pretty much this is a good bet for anyone.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 18:36

Right. Right. I was especially thinking as we're coming up on gifting season, this is one of those books that you can feel very confident that if you hand it to somebody, they're gonna be like, wow, I am so glad that I read that book, because it's not just, I feel like I'm a little bit making it sound like it's kind of self-helpy or something. This is just a fascinating novel. It's it's really very, it's very, very interesting. All the different versions of her life that you get to see her experience. They're really interesting. I loved this book.

Kaytee Cobb 19:10

I loved it, too. It was so good. I'm so glad you made me read it. Okay, my third book this week, is one that I also loved. It's *The Once and Future Witches* by Alix Harrow. This book is gorgeous. It is gorgeous. It's just stunning. It's not like a crazy moving bumping plot, but it's really wonderful. And it was a huge hit for me. So I will start by saying that I also loved *The Ten Thousand Doors of January*, which plenty of readers and my book twins again, came back to me and they were like, Kaytee, I thought you liked books that moved fast. What's wrong with you? And I was like, No, I loved this book. I loved the world she created for us. This is the very like very same pacing and vibes to that one. So just know that going in, but every sentence of this book you get to kind of revel in the writing and the ways that she turns a phrase.

Kaytee Cobb 20:03

Right at the beginning for a setup, we have three sisters. So paging anybody with sisters, June, Bella, and Agatha, and they are estranged from each other at the start of the story. And it's a source of pain for all three of them. But a strange occurrence one night in March of 1893, brings them back together. From there, they are drawn into the women's suffrage movement of New Salem, Massachusetts, they are fighting the patriarchy, which not only wants to silence women, it wants to do so by making sure that witches never return to the Salem area, the New Salem area of Massachusetts. The words that hold power in this world are hidden all around them. So they might be in a nursery rhyme. They might be in an old wives tale, they might be stitched into the hem of a garment. But there's words everywhere, that are like the keys to spells, the keys to unlocking spells, and the ways that Alix Harrow like, weaves them into the story, and gives you a little epigraphs at the beginning of a chapter that has a little nursery rhyme that's maybe a little bit changed, like "Little girl blue, come blow your horn" is one example of them, right? I already sent my book away, so I can't even like flip through it and and rattle them off, but they stick in your head. So this book gives me goosebumps just to talk about it and describe it again. Women in this book are powerful. And Alex Harrow leans hard into that into this novel, it reminded me very much of *The Book of Longings* by Sue Monk Kidd, which also released this year except instead of ancient Jerusalem, and Jesus, and writing, we have New Salem, the 19th century, and women's rights and women's fight for power. So it's beautiful. Driven by setting an atmosphere. I loved it to the moon and back, it was five stars for me. These three sisters captured my heart. It's *The Once and Future Witches* by Alix Harrow.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 21:57

Okay, and do you think *The Ten Thousand Doors of January* or *Once and Future Witches*? Which Alix Harrow do you think is the easiest to get started on with her?

Kaytee Cobb 22:08

I think she has honed in on this book and and really like gotten to a point where it moves along more regularly than *Ten Thousand Doors of January*, it doesn't have any kind of up and down in pacing, you're just kind of slowly tracking along through the story. So

Meredith Monday Schwartz 22:27

Got it. Got it. Okay.

Kaytee Cobb 22:29

Those were our six current reads. And that means that we can jump into our deep dive, which we didn't tell anybody about at the top of the show, because I got distracted. Sorry about that, guys. So today, we are talking about the endings that make or break a book. And this was a listener suggestion. And we are so grateful for her suggestion here. So Meredith, what did this bring to mind, right off the top of your head?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 22:52

I had a lot of thoughts. Okay. The first and most overarching thought I had, I've noticed that I can have a lot more space, or room for endings being a lot of different ways compared to other readers. And I also notice that it's extremely rare for me to be angry at a book because of what happened at the end. It's not to say it's never happened. But it just doesn't happen to me very often. And I hear often people saying, I love that book, but the ending ruined it for me. I just can't really think of a book that I would say that about. All of that being said, however, if I'm going to give side-eye to an ending or kind of have a thought in that way about an ending, it's usually going to be one of two things it's going to be in mysteries and thrillers, especially thrillers. And because I expect it in thrillers. It's more in mysteries where it's going to irritate me. If I feel like it's wrapped up in a way where kind of the solution to the mystery comes right out of the blue. And there's no way you could have seen it coming and they just need to come up with it's more likely to happen in a thriller, which is why I prefer mysteries to thrillers. The other thing is if I feel that an ending feels phoned in, sort of like the author got almost tired of the book that he or she was writing and the ending was sort of like I just need to be done. And so that feeling of lack of effort will definitely raise my blood pressure. But overall, I just am not that affected by endings. How do you feel about it? I think you're not the same as me, Kaytee.

Kaytee Cobb 24:31

I well. One of the things that I wrote down in my little like free form notes for today is things that make me want to Ratatatouille, a book is the opposite of the other two things that I listed, which is when something super manipulative happens at the ending to be like, and now here's a new character or a new thing that you know, and again, you're right, exactly. It's thrillers where they're like, but you never even knew that there was a dude on the bridge with her. Done and done and you're just like, no, that's not a that's not a thing. That's not well No, trust your readers, let them in, let them play. I don't I don't like that at all. So on the other flip side of that, is that I don't have to have a tidy ending, necessarily, but I don't want it to be almost like what you're saying where it feels like the author kind of gave up, like, well, that's all I have to say about these characters. So I guess I'm done. And we don't get any resolution for the storyline. And that drives me crazy. I hate that. I don't need bows I don't need and then they lived happily ever after. But I need something where it's like, and this situation completed itself. The arc is finished now in some way, you know.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 25:40

Okay. Yes, I do know. So let me ask you this. How do you feel about books that purposely end in an ambivalent, and an ambivalent way where you're the author is clearly leaving you to decide? How, what happens? How do you feel about that, Kaytee?

Kaytee Cobb 26:00

Mostly, I hate those.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 26:04

And see, I love that. I really I love an ambiguous ending. Yes, because I always know what really happened.

Kaytee Cobb 26:13

Since you're a One so you're like obviously the world goes this direction.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 26:17

Right? I like love

Kaytee Cobb 26:19

Okay. Yeah,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 26:20

that doesn't bother me at all. But boy, I've seen that heat up. There's a book that we recently has been getting a lot of buzz that we will talk about on next week's episode. Um, a lot of people are heated up over the ending of that one.

Kaytee Cobb 26:35

Yeah. Yeah, no, I've seen that same heat, because I know which book you're talking about. And just those statements. I'm like, I don't know if I should ever read that book. I feel like I should just put it aside, because it's just gonna piss me off to be like Wait, what? What? No! What happened, then? You know, like, that drives me crazy.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 26:54

Oh, that is so funny. I love that. I would really love our listeners, let us know. I want to know I'm positive that I am in the minority on this.

Kaytee Cobb 27:05

I'm positive you are, too because I feel you're very-wrong-Meredith at this point, like we're gonna hashtag you instead of your brother.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 27:11

Yes, I but I want to know, listeners, is there anyone else out there who feels like I do about it an ambiguous ending?

Kaytee Cobb 27:19

Okay, I have another thing that I think we are opposite on in endings. So I can be kind of somewhat enjoying a book feeling like, yeah, this is fine, whatever, good enough to keep going. And if at the end, the author manages to make me cry, I will be like, I loved this book. It's so good. Not not they

manipulated me into crying. But when I get to the end of the book, if it's enough to elicit tears from me, which is dumb, because it's not like I'm a very difficult person to make cry. Obviously, I've already cried on the phone call with you today. But I just like the way if they can pull the story together, or they can make me connect to a character enough by the end, that could totally bump it up half a star for me to be like, wow, okay, well, obviously, even though you know, the rest of the book was fine. They got me enough that I cared enough that by the end, I was crying. I love this book.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 28:15

So it will fully like it could actually raise like a full star rating if that happened?

Kaytee Cobb 28:20

Probably not a full star, probably about half a star. But it'll get me to start thinking about like, well, what what made that ending so powerful to me that it that I got emotional about it. Maybe I actually did care more about those characters than I thought even though the rest of the book, I didn't care that much. And again, I'm not saying I want them to be like, and then she found the baby that she had adopted out 18 years ago, and walked into the store and they hugged for the first time. Like just to like, get you to cry. I don't like that manipulation. But I do like, at the end having enough resolution and enough like sweet finality to it that I end up crying over a character.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 29:02

So that's, that's a good thing for you. Well, one of the things that I thought about that that actually will tick me off within it is especially in mysteries. If this hasn't happened very often at all, really, there's just a handful of books that I can think of that fall into this category with one very much rising to the top books, where the mystery that the entire book is about is not resolved at the end of the book and never will be like it's not like it's going to go into a second book. That kind of ambiguous ending, to me feels like a broken promise. It feels like when you read a mystery, you're going to get a resolution to that mystery. Right?

Kaytee Cobb 29:45

Does this happen to you with regard to crime as well? Or you just need to know one way or the other going in.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 29:53

Right so when I read through crime, I definitely will ascertain whether or not there is an actual resolution to the case. And I usually will do that before I, before I really get into it, I'll usually, you know, I'll usually flip to the end of the book, or if I don't know about the case independently, I'll flip to the end of the book just to sort of see because I don't want to invest myself in an entire book thinking that there's going to be a resolution only to find out that actually, nobody knows anything at all. But if I know that going in, and if it's written in a way that they kind of nobody knows the actual resolution, but kind of like that show Unsolved Mysteries, where it's like, No, I mean, yes, it's unsolved, but not really, because the entire episode or the entire book, we're going to basically tell you what happened, but we just can't prove it. I'm I'm all in for that. But of course, the book I'm talking about which, you know, this is not a spoiler, because you can any review, it's going to say something about this, Tana French's first book in the first book in the Dublin murder squad series, which is actually my favorite in the series, called In the

Woods, falls into this category. And it's the one that most people will say, I Rataatouille'd that book because I got to the end, and there wasn't that kind of resolution that I was looking for.

Kaytee Cobb 31:13

But you like that one? that's your favorite one?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 31:17

It's my favorite one of that series. I'm not a gigantic fan of that series. But I think it's the one that has the most interesting mystery. With all of Tana French's books. Each book has a major problem in it, in my opinion. But the problem is never the same problem. It's like it's a bunch of different problems. So

Kaytee Cobb 31:36

It's like rotating around.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 31:38

Yeah, right. So she's Yeah, I don't have as much love for that particular series that many, many, many people do. But that first one gets a lot of side-eye for that particular reason. So. But if you like I said, if you look at any of the reviews there, they're not going to spoil exactly what happens. But they're going to say, Oh, you know, heads up, there's some unresolved aspects of this that you should probably know about when you go into it. Otherwise, you're going to be really, really ticked off.

Kaytee Cobb 32:06

Okay, so speaking of series, what about unresolved endings in series books where you know, it's going to move into another book in a series, is that the same where you just kind of have to know going in, this is unresolved, or is it? Like you want to throw it and that's why you don't like to read series.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 32:23

So, right, in some cases, like with American Royals, for example, when I read it, I actually didn't know going into it, that the ending was a complete and absolute cliffhanger. And I liked the book so much, and I so wanted to have to know what was going to happen next, that I was like, Oh, my gosh, are you serious? But I wasn't mad, because I just wanted to read the next book. Right? So I went in there, I had to wait a few months. And so that doesn't make me mad. But what will make me mad is, if when I get the next books, I'm looking at you Majesty, and it doesn't move us substantively forward, like for me once, right? I'm okay with that. Fool me twice. And I ain't never reading you again. Like, I don't want to be manipulated in the same way twice. Because then I feel like, oh, okay, now I'm just buying books for no reason. Right? So that that's the difference for me in a series if you're if you're going to cliff hang, you know, there's their series that do it really well, where the end of each book leads into the next book, but you feel like you've gotten somewhere.

Kaytee Cobb 33:31

Like A Curse so Dark and Lonely.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 33:33

Well, exactly or the Outlander series. You don't feel like you're reading the same book over and over again, you feel like, Oh, I just continued to be really invested in the series. So yes, I'm okay with it. My preference, though, and we've talked about this a lot on the show, is to know in advance, like, hey, just so you know, you're gonna, you're not going to get the resolution that you want, there is another book coming. So then you can decide, do I want to read it now? Or do I want to wait till the next one is available to me, so I can go right into it? In that case, I would prefer to know in advance,

Kaytee Cobb 34:05

yeah, I'm the same. In that in that way, we are the same. A lot of this, we had some differences. But in that way, we're definitely the same. If I know ahead of time, I can make an informed decision. Like, yes, pick those up now or wait until the entire thing is released, or whatever. Or at least the next book.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 34:24

Right, well, and then the other category, kind of the last category that I have for endings that I can get give a little bit of side eye to is when we have books that where we have a really strong female lead, that kind of the whole book is about the strong, disruptive female, you know, character, who then at the end of the book is really domesticated. You know, and that, you know, Little Women, Little Women is the first book I ever read that made me feel like Wait, what? Wait, what happened to Jo? Wait,

Kaytee Cobb 34:57

Jo, what? Wait.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 34:58

what and you know, Hunger Games to certain extent is the same way. I know where we have Katniss, you know, and so I just you know, and don't don't get me wrong. I love the Hunger Games series. I love the book Little Women. So it's not like you're at all ruined those things for me, but it does make me go. Hmm. I don't love the domestication of a strong female character just to wrap a book up in a bow at the end.

Kaytee Cobb 35:24

Yeah, no, I agree with that one for sure, as well. That I'm all about strong, powerful women. Even I feel like there's some of that. Not definitely not to the same extent, but in The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, where it's like a guy has to come in and kind of help her get her. Even though Lisbeth Salander is so frickin amazing that I can't even remember the title, but or not the title, the character, Michael Something... comes in and he's like, well, but I'm the one who put together the mystery. And I'm the one who like saved the day and.... I love those books. But it's definitely some of that same thing where it's like, no, Lisbeth is a kick booty female, she can do this. Back up. Right?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 36:10

Right. Or that book The Boys Club that I read a few weeks ago, the legal the book that set in the law firm where the end, you know what I do have to say that was an ending that irritated me. That was an ending that that got my blood pressure up. So maybe there maybe I am a little affected by endings a little more than I give myself credit for that one irritated me

Kaytee Cobb 36:32

Hmm... book therapy with Meredith again. We did it.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 36:34

Right! Changing hearts and minds.

Kaytee Cobb 36:38

That's what we do here. Welcome to Currently Reading. Okay, let's press some books, shall we? What do you have to press this week?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 36:44

So I wanted to bring together two things with this press. First of all, this is one of my favorite books of all time, so it had to go in the press list. But also, I wanted to bring together my love of time travel, which everyone knows I love books with time travel. And also my very rare exceptionally rare love for a book where the ending destroyed me. Destroyed me.

Kaytee Cobb 37:12

Oh my gosh, I have my library app open. What is it?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 37:15

Well, I think you've already have you must have already read it because this is a backlist gem. It's *The Time Traveler's Wife* by Audrey Niffenegger. Destroyed me the ending of this book to this day. If I even let myself really think about the ending of this book, I can literally tear up and I cannot tell you how singular that is for me. Okay, so here's the setup. So I love our lead character. This is such a good love story. And I'm not even into love stories. Love stories irritate me. Oh, this one is so good. Okay, so our lead characters, so we have Chicago librarian, Henry, and he suffers from an exceptionally rare genetic disorder that causes him to drift uncontrollably back and forth through time. He has no control over it guys. And on one of his time travels, he meets the love of his life, Claire, and they get married. But it's super hard to be in a relationship with Henry, because, you know, his inability to remain in one place at one time. So he and Claire are continually out of sync in their in their lives and in their love. And they meet each other at different points in their lives. And I love this book so much. I love this book. Johnnie loves this book so much. We both read it, we've both reread it. And for both of us the ending is just it's. I cannot think of another book that I was literally on the floor, getting my carpet soaking wet, because I was crying like sobbing, crying, not just like, Oh, I have a pretty little tear in my eye. But like convulsing crying over the ending of this book. And I say that in the best way possible, which of course, is very singular, because I hate

Kaytee Cobb 39:13

It's my favorite thing!

Meredith Monday Schwartz 39:14

Right? It's your favorite thing. I hate this. And yet in this particular book, it's just exactly right. Because it's such a great story. It's such a great love story. I love it. So this is *The Time Traveler's Wife* by Audrey Niffenegger.

Kaytee Cobb 39:30

And I have read it you're right and I, I loved it. Oh my gosh, I loved it so much.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 39:35

But you but you know what, do not see the movie because the movie is atrocious. So if you've seen the movie and you're like, What are they talking about? Please read the book because it is a completely different animal.

Kaytee Cobb 39:48

Well, first wipe the movie from your memory. Just get rid of it entirely. And then read the book.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 39:53

The movie's terrible.

Kaytee Cobb 39:55

Okay, so my book. I was preparing for this episode, and I've just been thinking about this week, and then started thinking about this year. And I decided that I want to press *Burnout* by Emily and Amelia Nagoski, which is I'm gonna just go ahead and call it the book of 2020. Because burnout is the thing of 2020. So, I've first talked about this one. In like, I think May of 2019 is when I first read it. It's been about a year and a half, it made it onto our best books of 2019 episode. But the subtitle of this book is *The Secret to Unlocking the Stress Cycle*. And it has been heavy on my mind for a year and a half, really. But especially since hearing the two authors who are sisters be interviewed on Brene Brown's Podcast, where they talk through what it looks like to unlock the stress cycle. My favorite part of that episode is 45 minutes in, Brene is like, you guys were on page seven, like, that's how much amazing stuff is in this book that in 45 minutes, asking these sisters about what their writing process was, and how they got this research together. page seven, that's all she made it. I mean, it's just it's so chock full of amazing advice, and really helps you get a handle on what it looks like to carry a load an emotional load, especially as a woman on your shoulders, and then how to move through the stresses that that are loading up on us everyday in our lives. And 2020 has had a lot of those. So we've got, you know, lockdown and presidential elections and all the things in 2020. I guarantee that every single person listening is carrying some sort of stress on completed stress cycles on their shoulders. And so reading *Burnout* is going to make a difference for that. And that's why I want to press it into your hands so we can pick it up and move through the stress cycle together. We're going to move forward, together. All of us. Together. It's *Burnout* by Emily and Amelia Nagoski.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 42:01

Yeah, I think this is a great press and I think it's a perfect time for people to pick it up. And I think we're all ready to complete our stress cycle.

Kaytee Cobb 42:10

Correct.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 42:11

As a group, as a group together.

Kaytee Cobb 42:14

As a nation, as a world, we need to complete our stress cycle.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 42:19

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

Kaytee Cobb 42:27

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

Meredith Monday Schwartz 42:30

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 currentlyreadingpodcast.com.

Kaytee Cobb 42:41

You can also contact us directly at @currentlyreadingpodcast on Instagram or via email at currentlyreadingpodcast@gmail.com.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 42:48

And if you really want to help us, rate and review us on Apple podcasts, and even more importantly, shout out on social media. That, you guys, helps us so much.

Kaytee Cobb 42:59

Yes, your recommendation to your bookish best friend is the best way to pass along your love the podcast to others and help us grow. Thanks for doing that.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 43:07

Until next week. Happy reading, Kaytee.

Kaytee Cobb 43:09

Happy reading, Meredith.