



# Season 4, Episode 12: Book Gushing + Packing Your Non-Fiction November TBR

Mon, 10/18 • 54:31

**Kaytee Cobb** 00:10

Hey readers, welcome to the Currently Reading podcast. We are bookish best friends who spend time every week talking about books that we read recently. And as you already know, we do not shy away from having strong opinions so be ready.

**Mary Heim** 00:24

We are light on the chitchat, heavy on the book talk, and 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.

**Kaytee Cobb** 00:35

I'm Kaytee Cobb. I'm a homeschooling mom of four living in New Mexico. And I'm constantly trying to learn and grow through my reading.

**Mary Heim** 00:43

And I'm Mary Heim, a working mom of one and I have rarely met a memoir I didn't enjoy. This is episode number 12 of season four and we are so glad you're here.

**Kaytee Cobb** 00:52

Hurray. I'm excited to record with you today.

**Mary Heim** 00:54

I'm happy to be back friend.

**Kaytee Cobb** 00:57

Excellent. And we both kind of hinted at it in our bite size intro but we're going to let you guys know right at the top of the show that we are going to fill up your TBRs for Nonfiction November today. So obviously this is dropping mid October but we just want you to be able to get those library holds ready and be totally prepped at with huge stacks of nonfiction that's great for November.

**Mary Heim** 01:19

Yes, plan that trip to the bookstore. Here we go.

**Kaytee Cobb 01:22**

Here we go. All right, but first, we're gonna get started the way we always do Mary, which is with our bookish moments of the week. What have you got for us?

**Mary Heim 01:29**

While talking about trips to the bookstore that was totally unintentional. But my bookish moment this week, Jeremy, my husband and I recently had a day date and we got a chance to go back inside our favorite indie bookstore, Boswell books. If you're here in Milwaukee or around the southeastern Wisconsin area, it's pretty much been since the pandemic, Kaytee if not pre pre baby, pre toddler that we have gotten a chance to go in and not just do curbside pickup and browse and no time constraints and look around and it was like... you would think it was like Ferris Bueller's adult day off. We were like kids in a candy store, running around filling up our arms not running around. We are civilized humans, but filling up our books for our arms with books filling up our TBRs. It was so much fun. We have our route through the bookstore that we always go through and it came back like riding a bike, got to check out all the new releases and talk to some of our favorite booksellers. Just like one of those tiny joys that you forget how much you love that thing and maybe how much you miss it until you get a chance to do it again. And it was so much fun. I am already counting down the days until we can book another babysitter so that we can get back. It was so much fun. It was a great moment.

**Kaytee Cobb 02:42**

That is delicious. I love it. What else did you guys do on your day datey? Was it only bookstore or coffee, dinner?

**Mary Heim 02:49**

You know, it's funny. We used to do this all the time. We just like bummed around town. I mean, obviously with COVID things are a little bit different. But we got to hang out in different neighborhoods, went out for lunch, went on a hike, got coffee. It was nice to just like have no no obligations. No naps to get home for. It was great.

**Kaytee Cobb 03:09**

This sounds like the perfect day.

**Mary Heim 03:11**

Yes. What about you, Kaytee?

**Kaytee Cobb 03:13**

Very fun twist of fate today. I also have a bookstore in my bookish moment of the week. So Mindy came up for a short visit on Tuesday this week, and I dragged her all around town to run errands. I was like, Hey, thanks for coming. We're going here and here and here. One of those errands was picking up my pre-order of Lincoln Highway from my local Indie Garcia Street books, which is my newly adopted Indie you guys. I love Indies. Delightfully, I had had a listener named Heather reached out to me the week before to ask for bookstore recs in the Santa Fe area because she and her family were coming for Balloon Fiesta. I had suggested this bookstore but we had not made any plans to meet up. Well lo and

behold, she recognized Mindy's voice when she was sitting outside at the cafe and she was so excited to meet her. Imagine my delight when I come back from an Onalee potty break and she almost faints dead away she's so thrilled she's just like verklempt to meet Mindy and I. The very fun thing about this Mary I'm gonna bring you into this is that Meredith had a bookish friends meetup in Austin this summer right? Heather, this Heather is the one who made her the crochet murder mermaid. Do you remember this?

**Mary Heim** 04:25

I do. Yes.

**Kaytee Cobb** 04:27

So now she has collected three of four hosts as like in person friends, so I'm guessing she's coming for you.

**Mary Heim** 04:34

Heather, come on up to the Midwest. We would love to have you or rather maybe I will escape the impending winter and come a little bit further south to meet her. I love that so much.

**Kaytee Cobb** 04:46

There you go. Wouldn't that be fun? And she's just she's just a delightful human. She's a great bookish friend. And it was just bookish serendipity. We've never well I've never had an in the wild sighting before that wasn't intentionally planned up. You know Like, oh, we're gonna have a bookstore get together and but this one, it just it just brought my heart so much joy. So that is my bookish moment.

**Mary Heim** 05:09

That is so much fun. I love that so much. Oh yeah. All right. I'm ready for you, Heather.

**Kaytee Cobb** 05:15

Perfect. All right, Mary, let's talk about some current reads what is the first book you want to tell us about this week?

**Mary Heim** 05:21

Okay, let's talk about it. Now I may be showing my cards right out of the gate, but I could not hold this one any longer. I really wanted this to be my first book this week. It is *Shadow of the Wind* by Carlos Ruiz Zafon. This is a book that I know is dearly beloved by so many people, it tops favorite lists for so many folks. I talked about it a little bit in our bookish friends Facebook group. And so many people came out of the woodwork to say that they loved it or it had been sitting on their shelves forever, and they wanted to read it. So it had a lot of hype for me. And if you're one of the very few like me who haven't read it yet, here's the setup. In post-war Spain, a widowed book dealer brings his only son Daniel to this haunting, like practically mythical cemetery of forgotten books, a place where stories just go to live out the rest of their days, when the rest of the world has forgotten them. I mean, just that alone, I could stop there. And I think that would be worthy enough to convince you to try and pick this up, but it keeps going. Daniel is drawn to a particular volume. The book is called the *Shadow of the*

Wind and that sets him off on a trawling, oftentimes dark and dangerous mystery through Barcelona to find its writer who has seemingly disappeared from the world. He, along the way, is also looking to find the answers to a story that someone seems to be trying to erase from history itself. Kaytee this book was so good. Now, this is a true Gothic novel I would say. Some might disagree with me but if you know me, you know that this is not typically my genre. I am not a big fan of Gothic novels I find them slow and meandering and not satisfying enough to my tastes. I know I am in the minority here. But I'm going to go ahead and say that you do not need to be gothic novel enthusiasts to appreciate and enjoy this one. It is a slow burn but it kept me turning pages. The prose is gorgeous, the story sucked me in and I had to know what was happening. I really felt like I was in 1945 Barcelona it hooked me in right away. It slowed down a little bit, the pacing definitely varies. I'd say that you need to be interested in the mystery or the hook to want to keep going but if you stick with it it for sure pays off. Something that was really special about the volume I have the back the author had taken pictures throughout Barcelona to help you set the scene. So as you're reading you can scroll through and think okay, this is what he anticipates the this back alley way to look like and this important house. It is such an immersive, immersive experience. I highly recommend trip. It was like a field trip. Trust me. I've barely been out of my house in the last two years. It was so great to be transported to Barcelona this way. I think the journey was truly Oh, it was so worth it. It is tragic. It's hopeful. It's strange, for sure prepare yourself atmospheric and dark but it is all encompassing and most importantly, it is for book lovers with a capital L. It is so perfect going into these kind of darker, colder months we're headed into. Cozy up at night with your perfect ASMR room and your perfect chair with your perfect blanket. And just lose yourself in this story. I loved it. That is Shadow of the Wind by Carlos Ruiz Zafon.

**Kaytee Cobb** 08:53

Oh my gosh. I'm in love with everything about this. I have to know because it's a catnip for me and a lot of readers... so Shadow of the Wind is the title of the book that he's you know, finding in this book. Is there a book within a book element? Do we get to hear part of that story?

**Mary Heim** 09:07

We get to hear bits and pieces. There's not a drawn out book within a book element. But you know enough of the story that it feels as though you understand... you understand his pull to this story, his pull to find the author and his interest in the story itself. So there's it's not as significant as some other book within a book, but it's not nothing.

**Kaytee Cobb** 09:30

Okay, excellent. That was great. Thanks, Mary. My first book this week is one of the books that we've had on the Indie Press List one that the novel neighbor brought to us. It's called The Very Nice Box by Laura Blackett and Eve Gleichman. This is a co-authored book which I'm kind of obsessed with the idea of co-writing with someone so I'm always interested to find another book that has two authors or people like Christina Lauren, right Liv Constantine, people who come up with an author pseudonym that includes both of their names. So this one, we have our main character. Her name is Ava Simon. She works at STADA in Brooklyn. STADA is a fictional version of IKEA. And Ava is a designer with a passion project that she likes to call "the very nice box" because it's like IKEA. So everything is modular, it fits together. The very nice box has very specific dimensions and very specific hinges so that

it's as appealing as possible from the outside. She's happy in her routine, and she does have a very firm routine. She divides her day into units. So every half hour block is a unit and she'll estimate "well this project should take me approximately four minutes... four units to complete. And then I'll walk my dog and that will be one unit." And so she's like, dividing out her day like this very methodical, maybe even a little bit on the spectrum. That's our main character, right? her life, though, is lonely, especially because she's grieving the loss of her fiance and her family from a car accident a few years back. So grief is a big part of the story. When her office gets a new manager boss, Mat with just one T, she thinks she knows everything about him. Just from the way he talks, the way he walks, his mannerisms, his stupid corporate bro speak. And of course, Mat and Ava end up spending a little time together. And mostly this book reads like a very tame romance. However, the spoilery blurb will tell you a little bit more. So as I read this book with trepidation I was holding my breath expecting the other shoe to drop and it does, but the way that it comes together at the end left me feeling breathless and a different way. Like it ended without giving me as a reader, time to catch my breath. Getting there though was a delightful ride I just felt like we needed another 40 pages to really finish this book out and and finish up the the downside of the roller coaster after the big plot climax, right? So otherwise, I love it had funny moments, it had great LGBTQ representation. And for a lover of IKEA flat pack furniture, like to the point that I actually love building IKEA furniture and find it very satisfying. This was a four star read for me, and it really would have been taken up even more if I could have had just a little bit more meat on the ending. So that is The Very Nice Box by Laura Blackett And Eve Gleichman.

**Mary Heim** 12:29

Not only do I love that little easter egg of an Indie Press List book finding its way to the Big Show, but I also love Kaytee that I learned something new about you today that you love to build flat pack furniture. Are you for hire? Will you...

**Kaytee Cobb** 12:43

I would love to build other people's flat pack furniture. The only thing that keeps me from doing it more often is eventually you run out of space in your house, right? You can't just continually build bookshelves and chairs.

**Mary Heim** 12:54

That's, not with that attitude.

**Kaytee Cobb** 12:57

I'm yeah, I'm a total weirdo about it. But I love doing it. I love that every piece you need is within that box. I it's just very satisfying to me.

**Mary Heim** 13:06

I get that. I love it.

**Kaytee Cobb** 13:08

Ok, what's your second book Mary?

**Mary Heim 13:09**

My second book this week, total departure from the first is Fat Chance Charlie Vega by Crystal Maldonado. So this was a buddy read with bookish friends which makes it even more fun. And I'm so excited and

**Kaytee Cobb 13:23**

Bonus half star right away.

**Mary Heim 13:24**

Bonus half star right away. Absolutely. I am so excited to talk about this one. I really loved it. But let's talk a little bit more about it. Here is the setup. Charlie Vega is a smart, funny, ambitious creative teenager who just also happens to be fat. Everything from her friendships, her complicated relationship with her now skinny formerly fat mom, the grief of losing her dad, all of that at the crux of this story. Her romantic relationships as well is complicated by her own journey to find happiness and fulfillment in her skin and the body she's in right now. So as you can see this one is why it is a true coming of age story kind of peppered in with all sorts of gems on body acceptance, nuanced female friendships, diverse representation in sexuality and race. We have identity exploration and at the heart of this novel is a love story. But it's so much more than that. There is some triggers I think you should be aware of I'm sure you can imagine some fat shaming, complicated mother daughter relationships, growing up with parents with mental illness or an eating disorder. So be aware of that if that's hard for you to read about but I thought it was handled really beautifully. And it was just such a fun book to read. I read it in a weekend. The love story made me relive every sweet fun beginning of a relationship I've ever had. Especially my husband the love interest Brian felt like a young Jeremy to me and I just loved that. I loved it. I thought the friend relationships in this book, particularly if you're handing this to an actual YA reader, The friend relationships were brilliantly done really navigating some hard truths and showing a really healthy supportive friend relationship. And of course, like I said, it is a hard, solid YA. This is not a Meredith book. This is a Mary book, but I thought it was really, yes, it is a Kaytee book. And here is something some readers on StoryGraph and Goodreads mentioned that they had taken issue with the fact that Charlie makes some decisions that frankly and understandably make you want to smack your head on the wall a little bit. I'm going to gently push back here on that because I heard the author speak about this really wonderfully. She comments on how this was purposeful to give Charlie and other Black and brown young protagonists a chance to not be picture perfect in their decision making and their choices and still be really valid and worthy and nuanced, complicated characters. I thought she handled it beautifully. I thought Charlie's struggles just felt really relatable as a human being no matter what your size is. Everything about this was a delight. I just hugged it at the end, and I can't wait to see what else this author does with her stories to come. That was Fat Chance Charlie Vega by Crystal Maldonado.

**Kaytee Cobb 16:10**

That sounds wonderful. It also sounds like a great pairing with Starfish by Lisa Fipps, which I read six months ago, maybe that one's verse novel, middle grade, but a lot of similar themes it sounds like and geared toward a slightly younger audience. So I definitely need to make that into a book flight and pick up the other half of that one

**Mary Heim 16:31**

You'd like this one Kaytee.

**Kaytee Cobb 16:32**

Yeah, yeah, I think I would. Okay, here's another left turn. I'm going to talk about Redemption Point by Candice Fox. This is the second book in a series which is called the Crimson Lake series. It was brought to my attention first by Erica Keckley, one of our bookish friends. Our detective in the series, our main our main character that we following throughout both books is Ted Conkaffey. He was wrongly accused of abducting a girl named Claire Bingley, and doing very bad things to her. The case was dropped, but only because they didn't have enough evidence to convict him, not because he was acquitted. That means he dealt with death threats and hate crimes. And of course, he lost his job on the police force because his fellow officers didn't feel they could trust him anymore. He moved out to a tiny Australian town in the Queensland rain forest called Crimson Lake. There he joins a PI agency with Amanda Pharrell, my favorite character in literature right now. They get along great, because Amanda is an ex convict. So she doesn't care about Ted's past because she's like, Hey, we all got baggage, right? I even wrote they get along with like Pringles and road trips. This is the second in a series as I mentioned, but all of that setup is the setup for the first book. Amanda and Ted are called in on this one to assist on a case of two bartenders who are killed in what looks like a smash and grab robbery. In the meantime, Dale Bingley, Claire's father is out for revenge. Those two cases kind of run parallel to each other throughout the book. In some chapters, however, we have a third storyline. We are in the head of a pedophile, someone who has been preying on young girls throughout Australia. And y'all this storyline is tough. Like I had to like pause, breathe, walk away. I was listening to this one because I love Australian accents in my audiobooks. And it was very it felt very, like icky personal to me to have to be inside this character's head. And I mean, you can't skip it because it's very much instrumental to the entire plotline of the story. Sorry, I can't be like, yeah, so just breeze past those chapters, no problem. But it's, it's really hard to read, it's really hard to read those chunks of that book. So all three of those storylines are happening concurrently. And it can be a little difficult to keep track of all of them. But the audio like I mentioned is great. The ending is very satisfying. And also, as I mentioned, Amanda Pharrell is one of my favorite weirdos that I have ever read. She's so strange. She's like Fezzik like Andre the Giant in Princess Bride with the way that she just like rattles off weird rhymes in the middle of like a really tense situation she just brings such lightness and fun to what is otherwise as you can tell a very dark storyline. So it took me more than a year to pick up book two in the series. And I do think that eventually I will pick up book three but in the meantime, I've got to let this one like fade away a little bit in my memory because it was pretty intense to read. So that one was Redemption Point the second in the Crimson Lake series by Candice Fox.

**Mary Heim 19:40**

My third book this week now as much as I loved my first two reads, dare I say I don't think they could even top my love for book three. So I am just all gushy happy book love this this episode. The book that I have for us this week for number three is Magic Lessons by Alice Hoffman. Magic Lessons is the pre prequel in the Practical Magic series. So if you have read Practical Magic, and then subsequently the prequel Rules of Magic, Magic Lessons is going way, way back to where the storyline of the Owens family, the Owens women all begins. So the witches of the Owens family are all cursed. No one can fall

in love with them without suffering grave peril. And we see this play out throughout the entire series. But Magic Lessons is where the curse begins. We go way back to the 1600s, where we meet Maria Owens, kind of this matriarch witch. Maria is abandoned by the man she falls in love with. And she follows him to Salem, Massachusetts, which of course, if we think back in history, is poor timing to take a trip to Salem, Massachusetts. But well, I don't want to give too much away. Because truly, the experience of this book is the magic itself. We see so much play out in this story. There's families, mothers and daughters, what women do to each other and mean to one another. We see the toxic roots of the patriarchy through the Salem witch trials in the US. But ultimately, we see this truly magical and lovely and hopeful story play out over time. Now it does span a fair amount of time. so the pacing ebbs and flows. I would say you have to commit to this one. There's a bit of exposition to get through. But I thought it was so so worth it in the end. I was a little worried that there would be no way for this story to have any happiness within it when we know about how the following decades of the Owens family plays out. But we do end this book with some hope and some joy and love and I thought it was just so brilliantly done. it respects the following two novels in the story really well, while still bringing something totally fresh and just totally mesmerizing, and really captures you in this world that she has built. So while this is technically the prequel to the prequel, I am not here to tell you to go rogue and read them out of order of release. I think you do gain so much by knowing the context of the family and some of what's to come read them in order of release. So that's Practical Magic, Rules of Magic and then Magic Lessons. And then come find me so that we can talk about them and get so excited for the final installment that's releasing this fall. In fact, I think will probably already have been released by the time this episode comes out. It is perfect witchy reading for October. I just loved it. And it's excellent on audio as well. If you would like to go that route. That's Magic Lessons by Alice Hoffman.

**Kaytee Cobb 22:33**

Perfect. Great job, Mary. I'm glad you brought some like witchy October reading today as well. That's really great. Okay, I also saved my gushy, ridiculous grouchiness for the end. I'm going to try and hold myself together through those you guys but bear with me. So on the listener press episode of season three, we had a listener named Amy who pressed All the Lonely People by Mike Gayle into our hands. She had also messaged me privately on Instagram she's aim... at she's at @Amyseptemberreads, when she finished it, and she told me I would love it. So I finally picked it up in September, and I am completely in love with this book. Like I'm out of breath just thinking about this book. Okay. If you love a curmudgeon book, you guys, listen up. Listen up all of y'all. Let me introduce you to Hubert. Hubert Bird is an 84 year old man, and he's lonely. He tries not to leave his house except to buy cat food. He occasionally opens his door to sign for his neighbor's packages, but it's begrudging assistance at best. Of course, he didn't start out lonely. Nobody starts out lonely. After meeting Hubert in the present time, we also get to meet him as he emigrated to England, from Jamaica, as part of the Windrush generation. We see him build friendships and community, fall in love, build a family, we see his house fill up, and then empty back out again. In the present timeline, that empty house is okay with him. But now with his daughter Rose. Every week, when Rose called Hubert from Australia to check in, he creates these elaborate stories about his friends who do not actually exist. So when Rose says that she's coming for a visit, Hubert is in a pickle. He has to find some friends and fast so that he can actually have relationships with people. Enter next door neighbor, Ashley, a young single mom who's also lonely, she and Hubert decided to do something about it, about loneliness, which is an epidemic right? In a cross



generational friendship, they form a committee to end loneliness. This story is filled with laugh out loud moments, insights into race and racism, sweet scenes that make you say awe, and an ending that left me hugging myself and ugly crying. I immediately ordered a paper copy so I can actually hug it to my chest and then I have already made four friends read it within this past week. Each of them sent me live messages throughout the book as they listened. And I'll tell you that every single time I end up crying again, even though I was not reading the book because it is so powerfully emotional and moving, especially at the end, I reached out to the author like a raving crazy fangirl, and felt absolutely head over heels in love with him. In fact, I also asked him to record a minisode with me, and that will drop into the main feed this Friday, you guys so you can hear us chat about the book and a spoiler free conversation of course. I loved everything about this book from the very first moment to last. The audio narrator is incredible. He brings to life numerous accents, we've got Welsh, we've got an elderly Jamaican pensioner, in this wonderful way you feel like you know these characters. Everybody is huggable, the plot is huggable, the characters are huggable, you want to be friends with these people. And here's the real deal, guys. For three years now on Currently Reading, I've been telling you that I've been looking for the next A Man Called Ove. And I was sure I was never going to find him. Well, it's been more than five years since I read Ove and I'm due for a reread at this point in time. So it could be recency bias. But right, the second I will tell you that I love Hubert even more than Ove. And I know those are big words, I know that's high praise. And I'm hesitant to even say it out loud, and like put my words out there into the universe, because I'm worried people are going to come to me, and they're going to be mad at me if they don't have the same experience. But for me for this reader right here for Kaytee Cobb, this was the perfect book. And I'm so grateful to Amy for pressing it into my hands and all of our hands and I can't wait for the rest of you to pick it up and to fall in love with you for it like I did. You should also know that if you read this book and you don't love it for any reason that is okay. I'm not going to tell you how you have to feel about it. But I don't want to hear about it. This book is so close to my heart. It will break my heart to hear your strong opinions, your spicy opinions, your whatever opinions about it so you can save those for your friends and your family and your Instagram feed. But don't call me out. Just let me be in love with Mike Gayle, with Hubert Bird and with All the Lonely People because I adore so that's All the Lonely People by Mike Gayle.

**Mary Heim 27:25**

Kaytee that sounds like you've got a contender for favorite of the year.

**Kaytee Cobb 27:29**

Oh my gosh, it's definitely going to be it's definitely going to be on my favorites of the year list. Absolutely. I can say that right now.

**Mary Heim 27:35**

I love it. Oh, that's I have a feeling that that one is going to be on many listeners' library and in their you know bookstore cart after this episode. Love that.

**Kaytee Cobb 27:46**

I hope so. I just want I want everybody to pick up this book. And I know when you guys get to hear Mike on Friday, you're just gonna fall in love with him like I did. He's just incredible. So those were our six

current reads. And now we get to oh my gosh, Mary, you and I are having such a hard time with this. We plan a deep dive we want to fill up your Nonfiction November TBR. It's not November yet, but we're getting close. And we like to plan you know, library hold lists and bookstores and I'm just I'm so sad that Megan has to do the show notes for this episode. Because even as we were getting ready to record we were like, Um,

**Mary Heim 28:19**

no, no, we are deeply sorry, Megan.

**Kaytee Cobb 28:23**

Poor Megan. Okay. All right, but let's get into it. Let's talk about Have you done... Do you do Nonfiction November as like trying to read 100% nonfiction for the month?

**Mary Heim 28:34**

I am not a Nonfiction November purist. However, I do try to make sure that it like a quote "at least a quarter" of the books I'm reading in November are nonfiction because I don't, I find this really interesting that I've noticed about my reading that I don't gravitate towards nonfiction. If I do, it's often narrative nonfiction or memoir. However, I would say I was looking back many of the books that I have brought to the press list are nonfiction, I tend to really feel very emphatically about nonfiction books, even though they make up such a small percentage of my readings. So I am given when you take a look at this list, you will think Mary, that's a small percentage of your reading. But I genuinely do, I don't read as many but when I do, I tend to truly love them I really affected by them. So November is when I try to make up for all of the other maybe neglecting of nonfiction that I've done through the rest of the year and really prioritize it. Put the books on, you know, on my library holds that I've been meaning to get to or pull the books off my bookshelf that I have had sitting there for a while and I think it's a nice way to kind of clear clear out the fiction worlds that I sometimes can too easily fall into. What about you, Kaytee?

**Kaytee Cobb 29:45**

I like that I I'm about a quarter nonfiction kind of throughout the year, but in November I do try to focus in my reading a little more. It usually jumps up a little more, you know, 30% maybe 35% of my books for the month will be nonfiction, I'm not a purist. I do not do a full month of nonfiction. I don't think I could do it. But like you, I do find that I have a lot of nonfiction books on my kind of all time favorites lists on my big shelf of keepers. So I think they're just a great addition to any readers' canon.

**Mary Heim 30:19**

Yeah, and a good way to switch things up too if you're not typically a nonfiction reader. As evidenced by our list, I think we have something for everyone.

**Kaytee Cobb 30:27**

I think we do too. So let's start out what's the first kind of category that you want to give us this week.

### **Mary Heim 30:33**

So the first category I'm going to start out may be a little spicy. I vacillated on whether or not this counts as nonfiction, but I chose literary nonfiction, which I would also kind of count as poetry. So I know that that can be maybe a little bit of a questionable choice. But you do see poetry kind of couched as nonfiction in a lot of bookstores. And poetry is a big one. For me. I have a lot of poetry books that I really enjoyed some that have really stuck out to me lately. I know one of these is a press, What Kind of Woman by Kate Baer and her newest book, which I think is coming out in November. So it would be an excellent book to pick up in Nonfiction November, I Hope This Finds You Well. Kate is a really excellent poetry writer. This newest book, I Hope This Finds You Well, are really excellent blackout poems of messages she's received, speeches that she's kind of read by prominent folks in you know, just kind of current events and turns them into these beautiful, cruel, heartbreaking stories into something completely new and whole and beautiful. I pre-ordered copies actually for every woman that I am buying Christmas gifts for this year because I loved it so much. So Kate Baer is always a good palate cleanser when I'm needing new, new poetry to pick up or something to kind of re- reset and refresh my brain. And I think that if you're looking for maybe an originator Kate Baer has followed in the footsteps of... you cannot go wrong with Mary Oliver. I particularly love A Thousand Mornings. That's a really great poetry collection. Even if you've never read Mary Oliver, you're probably familiar with her "What will you do with your one wild and precious life" quote, she's really affecting and beautiful. And I also threw in this category Great with Child: Letters to a Young Mother by Beth Ann Fennelly. While it's not poetry, it reads like poetry. I've talked about this one before, letters from a mother to her newly pregnant friend. It's poignant and beautiful, worth revisiting. I read it when I was pregnant. And now with a two and a half year old, I read it again and found it just as affecting, and it certainly reads like poetry and would call it literary nonfiction for sure.

### **Kaytee Cobb 32:43**

Yeah, I love that. I think that's a great category and not one that was on my radar at all. So I'm really glad that you brought some choices for that one. I'm going to start us out with because it's November and I want to make sure to highlight this kind of at the top before your eyes glaze over with how many books we're going to mention the Indigenous Voices category. So I only am going to bring you two here but I've got Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer, and Indigenous Peoples History of the United States, especially the Young People's Version by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz. So these are very different books. They're both written by Indigenous voices. Braiding Sweetgrass is kind of essays about nature, and the way that Indigenous history and thought kind of pervades nature. And it's just really beautifully done. This is a great book for fall or winter, when things are slowing down, buds are closing up, leaves are falling off trees. It just makes you feel all the nature around you in a big way. Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States is completely different. Of course, this is a treatise on the history of the United States, told from an Indigenous viewpoint. I especially I actually read both versions of it last November, the adult version and the young people's edition, because I wanted to buddy read with bookish friends and with my son and I actually really loved the young people's edition because the language was more accessible. And there's photos throughout that really bring the text to life in a different way. So and I just think this could be a book that is a little intimidating for a lot of readers so I definitely recommend picking up the young people's version because it's much more it's easier to swallow overall so those are my Indigenous voices picks for Nonfiction November.

**Mary Heim 34:29**

Those are some really good ones Kaytee and I think you just automatically added two books to my TBR. Those sound great, I love it. Love it.

**Kaytee Cobb 34:36**

So what's your next category Mary?

**Mary Heim 34:38**

Okay, my next category I gave a little bit of a shout out to in our bite size intro. It is memoir, which is truly I think probably my narrative nonfiction sweet spot. I love a memoir. And I particularly love a memoir on audio if it's read by the author. I think that's really fun to do. I had a hard time caulling with this list but I will share some of my favorites today. So first up I have At Home in the World by Tsh Oxenreider. This one came out a couple years ago. It really speaks to me. Tsh kind of presents herself as a homebody who also has wanderlust, which is 100% where I am comfortable in my travel, my travel love. So she gave me those armchair traveler vibes, she packs up her family, treks them all around the world, she's got young kids. You're really hearing about her experience traveling the world as a family. I thought that one was really, really excellent, reads really quickly and is a lot of fun. Next up I also brought by the same author as Great with Child, Heating and Cooling by Beth Ann Fennelly, which is a really interesting micro memoir. So it's like 52 stories, each one is just a page or two. And it kind of could also kind of be counted as poetry but I thought fell a little bit more in this memoir since it's really telling her story of you know, marriage and motherhood and you know, kind of her own coming of age. It's really interesting and a great one you can read in a sitting, which is a lot of fun. Next up, I have Glitter and Glue by Kelly Corrigan. Kelly is really well known for some of her other books that have come out recently. Tell Me More is one of them. She's got a great backlist. This one, I think flies under the radar a little bit. It's a memoir, examining the bonds between mothers and daughters. Really messy, beautiful, not always easy, made me want to call my mom immediately and gives me so much to think about now that I'm a mother to my own daughter. Loved that one. Next up I have, I Have Something to Tell You by Chasten Buttigieg. I'm a little biased, because I, Chasten is a friend of mine, and I got to read an early copy of his book and I am still pressing it into hands. It is this young LGBT coming of age story. Chasten tells his story all the way from growing up in Michigan and not being out all the way through marrying Pete and suddenly being on the national stage as this really prominent person in the United States. And I thought it was Chasten through and through. I really loved it. And here's a fun fact he's coming out with or has recently come out with a young readers edition, which I think would be great for any young LGBT readers that you have in your life or just young readers at all. That one is really delightful. I also Kaytee, you're gonna kill me I could just keep going too hard in this category, and then I'll let it go. This one I haven't seen many places. But if you also love a travel memoir like I do, this one is All Over the Place: Adventures in Travel, True Love and Petty Theft by Geraldine DeRuiter. And it is she is a travel blogger. So she's really got a knack she's got her voice down. She's got a knack for storytelling, that she talks about love and loss and adventure and figuring your stuff out as you go. But also talks a lot about sharing that adventure with someone you loved, which I think is really really fun. And of course no memoir category would be complete if I didn't talk about Mindy Kaling's books, if you haven't read or listened to Is Everyone Hanging Out Without Me? and her second book, Why Not Me?

They are hysterical. They are so much fun to read. They're excellent on audio. You can tell she's a comedy writer, and they are books that I could reread over and over again. They're just a delight. Okay, those are my memoirs. Kaytee, what about you?

**Kaytee Cobb 38:27**

Yeah, I definitely had a memoir category as well because it's absolutely one of my favorites. And I am shocked actually that none of mine are on your list, although I have read plenty of the ones that you enjoyed and was nodding along as you spoke so that was great. I'm going to add Know My Name by Chanel Miller, which is definitely a tougher read. It's incredible on audio. Chanel Miller was the victim in the Brock Turner sexual assault case that was in like at Stanford University. And she was unnamed at the time so even the title of this book just really is very poignant. Next I'm going to bring Love Lives Here by Amanda Jette Knox which I talked about really recently. This is the story of two members of a family both coming out as transgender and Amanda is wife and mother to the two of them and really impactful very personally affecting for me, I love that book. Heavy by Kiese Laymon is an incredible memoir about you know diet culture and weight in America and a son's relationship with his mother. Absolutely incredible. Born a Crime by Trevor Noah is one of the happiest books that's on this list. I adore it. You have to listen on audio because Trevor reads it. He does all the accents. He does all the different languages but he speaks incredible and finally the other happy fun that I want to add is Here For It by R. Eric Thomas which was a relatively recent press of mine but I read it a year or two ago and just cannot cannot even think about it without giggling to myself. So love that one as well. Okay, such next category Mary, what do we got?

**Mary Heim 40:03**

Alright, I'm going to take us into narrative nonfiction, which I'm being a little fast and loose with this category. Some of these could probably fall into memoir as well, but I look at them more as a moment in time or a specific topic. So that's what we're talking about here. I feel like we would be remiss to not include the king of narrative nonfiction himself, Bill Bryson, A Walk in the Woods. This one sat on my bookshelf for years because I thought I will not enjoy this. I will not care about this. It is really really fun follows him on his trek on the Appalachian Trail. He's got this great dry quick wit that's really fun to read interspersed with these interesting facts. Reads really quickly, it would be a great gift for readers and non readers alike. I thought that one was really fun. Next step is another must on audio a Year of Yes by Shonda Rhimes. Really excellent narrative nonfiction it's all about what happens when she lives a whole year of just living within the word yes of saying yes of trying new things super inspiring. Good when you need a shake up. I think would be perfect in this kind of post COVID not really post COVID world that we're in. This one was a recent press for me Animal Vegetable Miracle by Barbara Kingsolver. Part journal, part fact, story of a family going totally homesteader and living off their land and of course has the benefit of just gorgeous prose by Barbara Kingsolver. And last up this may have been my first press on the show, Dear Sugar by Cheryl Strayed, this is letters to an advice columnist that just span the entirety of the human experience. I pick this one up whenever I am feeling a little adrift need some grounding, need some love. Need some hope. It's, it can be tough, but it's also incredibly incredibly beautiful. That's an all time favorite. What's your next category Kaytee?

**Kaytee Cobb 41:26**

Love it. Love it. Okay, well, y'all know me well enough by now that you know, I could not come to a Nonfiction November deep dive without telling you about some of my favorite social justice books. So one of my very, very early presses on the show is Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson, which is of course, he's the founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, he is trying to get people off of death row. And every story in here will stick with you for the rest of your life. Evicted by Matthew Desmond, another press of mine, this is about private profit in the rental market in America especially. And the way that turnover and rentals just leads to poverty and Ellen's rough, but it's excellent. The Sum of Us by Heather McGee is a relatively recent read for me. She is an economist so she's coming at racism from a different point of view. She's looking at the way that racism costs all of us no matter what we look like, no matter what our skin color is. how all of us are affected by racism. And then the the next one I want to add, of course, is A Knock at Midnight by Brittany K. Barnett, which when I brought it to the show, I told you all like this is your next big social justice read. Brittany K Barnett is helping, especially young mothers get off and get their sentences reduced. Regarding drug crimes, especially. That's because the story for her is very personal as her own mother went through a sentencing and a jail time a jail term. So it's just it's very personal. It's like memoir mixed with social justice. But it's really incredible as well.

**Mary Heim 43:19**

That's such a good list Kaytee, and you actually I think for the first time we've had crossover, Just Mercy and Evicted are also on my list to come. And I will just second you and amplify those choices, such such good picks and such important reading and if you're local to me at all Evicted really focuses on the Milwaukee area in particular, so a must read if you're at all familiar with Milwaukee, but I think it's a must read for everybody.

**Kaytee Cobb 43:45**

Definitely. So what category were those in for you Mary?

**Mary Heim 43:48**

Those categories I put kind of in the investigative nonfiction kind of almost looking at like from a journalistic lens is that's where I put those two. So what else is in there? What else is in there? It's really funny because my third choice in there is such a departure such a deviation that I almost have to laugh putting it next to these two books, but it is a previous if you're feeling maybe a little downtrodden by reading those two, I would recommend for some light hearted levity to pick up HRH: So Many Thoughts on Royal Style by Elizabeth Holmes. Again, how did these three end up in the same category you might ask? But it really a multitude. We contain multitudes that when I thought about something that felt like reading an article in a magazine or felt like reading a piece of journalism, this book fits in that category for me. So whereas maybe Just Mercy and Evicted feel like reading a dissertation, this one feels like reading a glossy magazine, all about royal style, but it's a really fun one. I really enjoyed it.

**Kaytee Cobb 44:49**

Well, I know Meredith would be so upset if we didn't add Bad Blood to that category as well by John Carreyrou. So especially now it's so it's so in the sight guys because of the Elizabeth Holmes trial. Definitely put that one on your Nonfiction November TBR. Okay my turn?

**Mary Heim 44:50**

I think so maybe.

**Kaytee Cobb 45:05**

All right, I'm going to give you guys my favorite productivity books and this is, we have a lot of type A people on the team here at Currently Reading so we all love these books a little bit but I have pressed a number of these as well I'm going to give you Essentialism by Greg McKeown, Lazy Genius Way by Kendra Adachi and Atomic Habits by James Clear. All three of those were really great for me as a human in this world tend to really narrow in on what's important to me, what matters, how to be good at the things that matter and lazy at the things that don't, and how to build habits that really make all that matters stick in my life. So all three of those books, I'm not going to talk about them individually, but all three of them really helped shape the way that I try to run my life so I just had to throw those in as well.

**Mary Heim 45:56**

Those are really good ones and I will second particularly Lazy Genius Way. That one was on my list as well. Such a good one does not require a lot of you but you get a lot out of it. I loved it. And Kaytee my next category is kind of piggy piggybacking off on that, and this is my last category as well. Kind of within that personal developmenty sphere of just kind of supporting new habits and supporting that deep dive into yourself. I loved this book when I was going through a career change. This one is Designing Your Life by Bill Burnett. It does a really good job if you're kind of at a crossroads and figuring out where do I want to go next with the work that I do. I loved that one. I know Meredith is big on business books, and that one that was was really relevant and resonant for me. I also of course cannot talk about nonfiction without pressing my queen Brene Brown. I think any of her backlist are great, but I really loved The Gifts of Imperfection and Braving the Wilderness. She's got a couple little mini audio, like one hour lectures that I really loved gifts of imperfect parenting, there's a couple like that that are actually her speaking to an audience and they're about maybe just under an hour really impactful she is just such a like one two punch of a speaker so those are really great ones to listen to. And lastly I'll add in Burnout by Emily Nagoski. We've talked about this one a bit it's so so good. If I took nothing else from this book, learning how to complete the stress cycle is something that has shifted how I live my life and is like continues to go with me through the now maybe two years since I've read this book. Loved it I think Burnout is a must read and I'll plug her second one as well Come As You Are if you want to maybe get a little bit more R rated and dig into like your personhood, your sex life and who you are particularly as a you know, woman. That is another really good one. Emily Nagoski does a good job probably could have gotten into that investigative journalistic category as well because she's science minded. She does great research. And I think everything that she talks about is really really pertinent to all human beings. But she does a particularly good job of focusing on anyone who identifies as a woman. I love. I love all of those.

**Kaytee Cobb 48:12**

Excellent. Okay, my last one was my favorite personality deep dives which again piggybacks right along with what you were just talking about. So I only have three here I've got The Road Back to You by Suzanne Stabile and Ian Morgan Cron. If you want to find out more about yourself and the enneagram,

which we talk about all the time here on Currently Reading, this is a great primer to it. The Four Tendencies by Gretchen Rubin kind of goes with that productivity and habits thing that I was talking about earlier, but really being able to figure out what tendency you are, and the tendency of other people in your life can be really useful and make your life easier and better. And then finally, if you want just a broad overview of all different kinds of personality frameworks, I would recommend Reading People by Anne Bogel. Y'all know we love Anne Bogel over here but this is a very small book that really dives into you know, Myers Briggs, the five the Strengths Finder, Gretchen Reubens habits, the enneagram all kinds of different personality frameworks that you might be able to then go from that book to the one that interests you most. So it's a great primer to get you into well if I don't care about personality at all, which one could I maybe think I might care about so that might be a great one to start the month with and then go from there. Okay, Mary, I think that was like 68 books. I don't know, it was a lot.

**Mary Heim 49:33**

Well, I'm sure Megan will be able to tell us what our total number is. And she'll probably ask us to never do another one like this ever again, another episode like this, but we did it.

**Kaytee Cobb 49:42**

Yes, we did. And let's add at least two more book titles to these show notes. What are you going to press into our hands this week, Mary?

**Mary Heim 49:50**

All right. So I couldn't not press nonfiction. I was so excited. I've been kind of hanging on this one to press for quite some time. And this month, felt perfect. This book is My Life in France by Julia Child. So there is so much about Julia Child that we know from movies, from her shows, from her books. But I think this story in particular, written by Julia herself, really tells an accurate and very real story of a real human being, living and working and eating in Paris. We see Julia grow from this expat arriving in Paris in 1948, with her husband, speaking no French, she's just kind of expected to fit into this role as tagalong housewife. And we know that that's not the path she follows. We see her learn to cook, enjoy the art of eating in France and become this really impressive, self made woman across the globe. This one, if you were enjoying being plopped right into Barcelona with Shadow of the Wind, this one will take you straight into Paris, and make you feel like you're chopping onions and browning butter right alongside her. I think if you're maybe not totally a nonfiction reader, this one reads enough like fiction that you will just get totally captured. And I just loved it. I think that it is a backlist that flies way too under the radar or at least has within the bookish circles that I frequent. So I think if you haven't read this one, it's a definite definite good pick for Nonfiction November. What about you, Kaytee? What are you pressing?

**Kaytee Cobb 51:20**

Well, we have a little flight here because I also picked a memoir. The book I want to press this week is Sitting Pretty: The View From My Ordinary Resilient Disabled Body by Rebecca Taussig. I first brought this one to the show on episode 15 of season three, so you can hear me gush about it there if you need to. But for those who haven't heard that, or don't remember, this is a wonderful memoir by Rebecca



Taussig. It's eye opening and snarky, it's vulnerable and hilarious. The blurb is excellent. So I'm going to read a little bit from that to tell you more about it. Rebecca grew up as a paralyzed girl during the 90s and early 2000s. She only saw disability depicted as something monstrous like the Hunchback of Notre Dame, inspirational like Helen Keller, or angelic like Forrest Gump. None of that felt right. And as she got older, she longed for more stories that allowed disability to be complex and ordinary, uncomfortable and fine, painful and fulfilling. Writing about the rhythms and textures of what it means to live in a body that doesn't fit. Rebecca reflects on everything from the complications of kindness and charity, living both independently and dependently. Experiencing intimacy, and how the pervasiveness of ableism in our everyday media directly translates to everyday life. Disability affects all of us directly, or indirectly, at one point or another. And this memoir, you guys will personalize the story of just one person with disability, but also make you feel for the one in four Americans or 15% of the entire world population that lives with a disability, and consider how it will probably be a part of either your own life or the life of someone you love someday. So it really opened my eyes in a wonderful way, not because I've never been around or loved somebody who is disabled. But because Rebecca really invites us into her story. And it's a powerful memoir, because it's so personal. So this one I loved. I can't wait for y'all to read it. It's *Sitting Pretty: The View from My Ordinary Resilient Disabled Body* by Rebecca Taussig. That is it for this week. As a reminder, here's where you can connect with us. You can find me Katie at @notesonbookmarks on Instagram. Meredith is at @Meredith.reads.

**Mary Heim 53:31**

and you can find me at @Maryreadsandsips on Instagram.

**Kaytee Cobb 53:35**

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

**Mary Heim 53:46**

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

**Kaytee Cobb 53:54**

And if you super want to help us, become a patron. It's only \$5 a month we've got so much great bonus content over there for you and it helps keep the show ad free. Rate and review us on Apple podcasts or shout us out on social media. All of that makes a huge difference in our being able to find the perfect listening audience.

**Mary Heim 54:11**

Yes, a recommendation from you to your bookish friends is the best way to pass along your love of this podcast to others and help us grow.

**Kaytee Cobb 54:19**

Until next week. Happy reading Mary.

**Mary Heim** 54:21  
Happy Reading Kaytee